# The Leader's Resource Handbook

·Volume One·

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# THE LEADER'S RESOURCE HANDBOOK

**Volume One**

# The Leader's Resource Handbook

Volume One

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## The Need for Great Leadership

Great things have never happened in the kingdom of God without great leadership, and great things cannot happen today without leadership that is thoughtful, courageous, creative and steady.

As the church advances into the twenty-first century, there is need for more materials for leaders written by disciples. This book is being published in an effort to begin filling that need. It is not a A-Z manual on leadership—that project will have to wait for another day. It is, however, a collection of many great resources that leaders will find useful in evaluating their own lives, working with small and large groups, mobilizing disciples for more effective ministry, working more effectively with the weak and those with special needs and raising up the hundreds of new leaders who will be needed in the coming decades.

Our thanks to Jimmy Allen, Phil and Kris Arsenault, Jeff Chacon, Fred Faller, Dean Farmer, Brian Felushko, Gordon Ferguson, Sheila Jones, Roger Lamb, Roy Larson, Kip McKean, Randy McKean, Sherwin Macintosh and Wyndham Shaw for all the material they have submitted. All are effective kingdom leaders, and their contributions will make a difference in your ministry and your leadership.

Thanks also to Kim Hanson and Lisa Morris for their editing and formatting of this material and to Chris Costello and Chad Crossland for designing it so that it could be readable and user friendly.

Leadership in the kingdom of God is certainly a humbling privilege, but it is also a tremendous challenge. Let us be grateful that we are allowed to be used in such an important way and have humble hearts that are always ready to learn more.

*Thomas A. Jones*
*Editor-in-Chief*
*Discipleship Publications International*

(Portions of this book may be photocopied. See page 181 for details.)

## A Call for New Material

Many of you who are reading this have served as leaders for many years. You will see what is here and be reminded of materials of your own that could be added to such a collection. We would encourage you to send those materials to us at once. We are planning additional volumes. Your ideas, articles, outlines and lessons can have a greatly extended life when included in this kind of book. One of the beauties of the kingdom of God is found in the way we work together and so freely share with each other what we are learning. I would encourage you to not only let this book help you, but let it inspire you to share your best ideas so that others might benefit from them.

You may reach us in one of the following ways:

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# PART 1

✣

# Studies

# Go Make Disciples
## *The Dream*

**Kip McKean**

## Go Make Disciples Scripture Memory

This memory work is to be *completed* by the corresponding session.

| | |
|---|---|
| Session 2 | Mark 1:17; John 15:8 |
| Session 3 | Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2 |
| Session 4 | John 14:6; Matthew 22:37-38 |
| Session 5 | 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 4:13 |
| Session 6 | 1 Thessalonians 2:8; John 13:34-35 |
| Session 7 | 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a |
| Session 8 | Hebrews 3:12-13; Hebrews 12:15 |

## Background Reading

### *Discipling* by Gordon Ferguson

The book will be handed out at the midweek before the first session. Chapters 1 and 2 are to be read by Session 1; chapters 3 and 4 are to be read by Session 2, etc.

| | |
|---|---|
| Session 1 | Chapters 1-2 |
| Session 2 | Chapters 3-4 |
| Session 3 | Chapters 5-6 |
| Session 4 | Chapters 7-8 |
| Session 5 | Chapters 9-10 |
| Session 6 | Chapters 11-12 |
| Session 7 | Chapters 13-14 |
| Session 8 | Chapters 15-16 |

# Dates to Remember

## Prelude to a Movement

Average Congregation of the Mainline Church of Christ in 1979:

- 150 in attendance on Sundays; 50 attending midweek
- 7 baptisms per year (Six were children of members and over fifty percent of them would fall away. Only one person baptized was "from the world," and more than ninety percent of those would fall away.)
- Divorce rate in the world and in the mainline Churches of Christ was 50% (no difference)
- Reuel Lemmons stated 5,000 churches had closed their doors in 20 years (1959-79)
- Only 15 churches had over 1,000 in attendance on Sundays
- Only one church with 3,000 in attendance on Sundays
- Largest church outside the US had only 300 in attendance on Sundays

**1979** June 1, beginning of "The Boston Movement" (ICC)
30 would-be disciples in the Gempels' living room
Led by Kip and Elena McKean

**1982** Chicago planted (Fuquas)
London planted (Arthurs)

**1983** New York City planted (Johnsons)

**1984** Bairds and Gempels begin to serve as elders and elders' wives for Boston Church

**1985** Toronto planted
Boston reaches 1,000 in attendance
5 churches in 3 nations

**1986** Johannesburg planted
Paris (Kims) and Stockholm planted
Kingston reconstruction

**1987** "Remnant Theology" (remnant gathers in the '80s)
Reconstructions: San Francisco, Atlanta, San Diego, Mexico City planted (Lambs)
Hong Kong planted (Greens)
Bombay planted

**1988** World Sector Leaders chosen from couples Kip and Elena have trained
Tokyo reconstruction (Kims and Gurganuses)
Munich planted (Randy and Kay McKean)
Cairo planted

**1989** World Sector Administrators chosen
Boston sends out seven church plantings: LA, Miami, Seattle,
Washington DC, Honolulu, Manila, Bangkok

**1990** Kip and Elena McKean move to LA

**1991** Moscow planted from LA: 100th church planting
RD 1 (Red Dragon One): First church planted in mainland China
Gempels chosen to lead HOPE Worldwide

**1992** First fifth generation church planting:
Boston to London to Sydney to Auckland to Fiji
International Churches of Christ formally adopted as name for Boston Movement
LA sectorization: The Super-Church Dream

**1993** Blackwells chosen to be WSLs for Middle East
Bairds chosen to lead new Law and Media World Sector

**1994** Evangelization Proclamation: A six-year plan to plant a true church of disciples in all 170 nations with a city of over 100,000
Olivia McKean (Kip and Elena's daughter) baptized: Second generation of disciples

**1995** Baghdad planted

**1996** LA breaks 10,000 barrier

**1997** Hong Kong returns to mainland rule
World Sectors financially sectorized

## In 18 Years

One church → 312 churches
One nation → 124 nations
30 would-be disciples → 150,000 Sunday attendance
36 churches with an attendance over 1,000
(over half of these are on foreign soil)
13 churches with an attendance over 3,000
Largest foreign church attendance: Manila with 4,500
Largest church in movement: Los Angeles with 12,000 attendance

*"This is not a movement of man, but a movement of God."*
*Kip McKean*

LESSON 1

# THE DREAM
## Jesus the Revolutionary

### Psalm 126:1-3

We live in an age when men and women have largely forgotten how to dream. T. S. Eliot wrote that the dangerous dreamer is not of the night, but he who dreams and acts by day. The greatest and most dangerous dreamer that ever lived was Jesus. His dream became reality. Simply stated, he dreamed to change the world in one generation.

### 1. Jesus' Ministry

a.) Luke 4:16-22, 28-30
  1.) Jesus the Revolutionary
  2.) Same dream for Jew and Gentile
b.) Mark 1:16-18: Jesus gives purpose to all who follow him
c.) Mark 3:13-14; Luke 6:12-16: Selection of the apostles
d.) John 4:1-2: The Twelve have the dream (after 6-9 months)
e.) Luke 10:1-3
  1.) Harvest plentiful
  2.) The 72: Paired apostles (6 sets of 2)with 12 men in each group
f.) Luke 10:17, 21, 23: Joy: "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see...."
g.) Matthew 28:19-20: Three years of example

### 2. Apostles' Ministry

a.) Acts 1:15: The 120
b.) Acts 2:36, 38, 41-42: 3,000 baptized
c.) Acts 2:47: Daily baptisms
d.) Acts 4:4: 5,000 men
e.) Acts 5:41-6:1: Revolutionaries: dangerous dreamers
f.) Acts 6:7: Priests baptized
g.) Acts 11:19-23: Antioch: Historians believe this church reached 25 to 30,000
h.) Acts 16:5: Beginning of Paul's second missionary journey
i.) Acts 17:6: Turning the world upside down
j.) Colossians 1:7-23: Fruit all over the world

### 3. Go over Dates to Remember:

Paralleling Jesus' first-century movement to God's modern-day movement

### 4. The Price of the Dream - Psalm 126:4-6

a.) Tears for the lost
  1.) Luke 19:41: Jesus wept for a lost Jerusalem
  2.) Revelation 2:18-23: No toleration of sin
  3.) John 15:1-2, 8: Lack of fruitfulness is sin
b.) Tears of leadership: Jesus was a leader; to be like Jesus is to become a leader.
c.) Tears of persecution: 1 Peter 5:8-9

### 5. Why So Controversial?

a.) Narrow doctrine: one faith, one baptism, one church
b.) Purity of life—Taking a stand against: immorality, adultery, homosexuality, drunkenness, drugs and abortion
c.) Close relationships: true family in the church (Mark 3:34-35); some say "too much control," others "cult" or "brainwashed"

LESSON 2

# DISCIPLESHIP PARTNERS
# Go Make Disciples

**John 15:1-17**

Jesus is the perfect discipler and the perfect disciple. He is our supreme example whether our role, at a given moment, is a discipler or the one being discipled (examples in John 15:9, 10, 15). In John 15:8 and 16, "fruit" means disciples, not fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Most understand that discipling should occur at baptism and then for the rest of our lives, but biblically, it begins in evangelism. Remember: We cannot disciple others, unless we have been discipled.

**1. Premise** - John 1:35-42: A true discipleship-partner relationship is based on trust and friendship. We must trust that our discipler wants the will of God and our best interest. Ideally, we should become best friends with our discipler. (Our best friends need to be in the church.)

**2. Purpose** - John 4:1-2

a.) Ultimate purpose is to get our disciples to heaven and to win as many as possible.

b.) Daily contact, openness and involvement are all crucial.

c.) Look up the one-another passages on pp. 44-47 of *Discipling*.

**3. Pacesetter** - Luke 6:39-40; 1 Corinthians 11:1

a.) We need to be like Christ, but we also need a "flesh and blood" example.

b.) Set the example, especially in asking for forgiveness and in openness.

c.) Goal: To make the disciple more like Christ

d.) *Keep set time each week.*

**4. Position to Challenge** - Trust comes before challenge, then there is growth. This produces greater trust and the acceptance of greater challenges, thus producing maximum growth. How did Jesus challenge? How did Jesus "teach to obey?"

a.) Encouragement (Matthew 14:25-27; 16:17-19)

b.) Disappointment (Matthew 26:40)

c.) Anger/rebuke (Matthew 16:21-23)

d.) He was not a conflict avoider.

**5. Perseverance**

a.) Never quit.

b.) Communicate "I believe in you"; it makes the difference (Luke 22:31-32).

c.) Pray.

**6. Only three things are eternal:**

a.) God and heavenly hosts

b.) Word of God

c.) Souls of people

1 Thessalonians 2:19: "My joy, my hope, my crown, my glory."

LESSON 3

# PAUL, SILAS AND TIMOTHY
## Building the Kingdom Through Discipleship

### Acts 15:36-41; 15:32; 16:1-5

### 1. Tremendous Hearts

a.) Paul
- 1.) Forceful
- 2.) Not threatened by Silas (the prophet) or Timothy (the potential)
- 3.) Different types of discipling relationships - (adult/adult and parent/child)

b.) Silas
- 1.) Prophet
- 2.) "Go anywhere" life-style
- 3.) Number-two man

c.) Timothy
- 1.) Two cities
- 2.) Circumcision: willing to do anything
- 3.) Go anywhere: Paul had vision for Timothy

### 2. Ready Follower

a.) Acts 16:6-10
- 1.) Timothy and Silas catch Paul's vision
- 2.) Loyal to Paul, even though Paul did not baptize them

b.) Acts 16:22-34
- 1.) Silas bonds with Paul, not because of "fun" but because of "the work of God"
- 2.) Paul shares credit (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:11)

c.) Acts 16
- 1.) Timothy at 18 years of age
- 2.) Timothy: still needs discipling at perhaps 35 years of age

d.) 2 Timothy 1:3-8
- 1.) Depth of relationship shown in the emotion expressed
- 2.) Paul's challenges for Timothy include not being a "people pleaser"

### 3. Unselfish

a.) Philippians 2:19-24
- 1.) Timothy endears himself to the church
- 2.) Timothy endears himself to Paul

b.) "I have determined to live my life for another man's glory," said John Lusk when he was made the number-two man in Manila under the younger and less experienced but national evangelist, Cesar Lopez.

### 4. Exact Representation

a.) 1 Corinthians 4:14-17
- 1.) Imitation produces fruit
- 2.) Paul: not just one-on-one discipling, but an evangelist's God-given responsibility to disciple an entire congregation
- 3.) Titus 1:5: evangelist given the responsibility to disciple a geographical region.

b.) Acts 20:4: other "Timothy's" (multiplication)

c.) Hebrews 13:23
- 1.) Imprisoned like Paul
- 2.) Martyred (see *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* excerpt on the following page)

**spells T.R.U.E.**

## Timothy

During the reign [of Domitian] there were various tales published in order to injure the Christians. Among other falsehoods, they were accused of indecent nightly meetings, of a rebellious spirit, of murdering their children, and even of being cannibals; and at this time, such was the infatuation of the pagans, that if famine, pestilence, or earthquakes afflicted any of the Roman provinces, it was charged on the Christians.

These persecutions naturally multiplied the number of informers; and many, for the sake of gain, swore away the lives of the innocent. When any Christians were brought before the magistrates, a test was proposed, when, if they refused to take the oath, death was pronounced against them; and if they confessed themselves Christians, the sentence was the same.

The various kinds of punishments and inflicted cruelties were, during this persecution, imprisonment, racking, searing, broiling, burning, scourging, stoning and hanging. Many were lacerated with red-hot pincers, and others were thrown upon the horns of wild bulls. After having suffered these cruelties, the friends of the deceased Christians were refused the privilege of burying their remains.

Amongst the most distinguished of the martyrs of this period was Timothy, the celebrated disciple of St. Paul, and Bishop of Ephesus.

St. Paul sent to Timothy to come to him in his last confinement at Rome; and after that great apostle's martyrdom, he returned to Ephesus, where he governed the church till nearly the close of the century. At this period the pagans were about to celebrate a feast, the principal ceremonies of which were, that the people should carry sticks in their hands, go masked, and bear about the streets the images of their gods. When Timothy met the procession, he severely reproved them for their idolatry, which so exasperated them, that they fell upon him with their clubs, and beat him in so dreadful a manner, that he expired two days after.

*Foxe's Book of Martyrs*

### LESSON 4

# "TWENTY-FOUR/SEVEN" The Life-Style of a Disciple

### Exodus 16:1-20

After the miraculous exodus from Egypt, amazingly the Hebrews started to grumble. If we grumble against our leaders, we are grumbling against God (v. 8). God wanted to teach his people to depend on him *daily*. If they tried to gather manna for two days, it would be filled with maggots (v. 20). Some people ate more than others, but each person had all they needed (v. 18). God always takes care of all of our needs, big or small. ("Manna" means "What is it?")

### 1. Daily Prayer - Psalm 5:1-3

a.) In the morning

b.) Wait in expectation

### 2. Daily Bible Study - Acts 17:11-12

a.) Discipled by God—feel this. Ask as you study, "What is God saying to me?"

b.) Study the Bible with your discipleship partner—not just with people before baptism (Romans10:17).

c.) Help pick out great books and study guides for your younger disciple's quiet times

### 3. Daily Discipline - Luke 9:23-25

a.) Develop your schedule around the kingdom schedule, i.e. services, discipling times, workshops, family-group times, major church events, etc.

b.) Make a weekly schedule. Work with your disciple; don't just tell him or her, "Do it!"

c.) Disciplined dressing and actions: No flirting and wear nothing sexually alluring, too low, too high or see-through (1 Timothy 2:9-10)

### 4. Daily Accountability - Hebrews 3:12-14

a.) Be open, totally transparent

b.) Daily contact

### 5. Daily Evangelism - Acts 5:42; Acts 2:42-47

a.) Snapshot of first church

b.) Daily gatherings

c.) Have people in your homes

d.) Stick around the fellowship after the last "Amen"

### 6. Daily Pressure - 2 Corinthians 11:21b-28

### 7. Daily Renewal - 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

a.) Our death produces life: more and more people are baptized to the glory of God

b.) Perspective: light and momentary trouble

c.) God renews us day by day

## LESSON 5

# COUNSELING ONE ANOTHER Maturity in Christ

Paul, speaking to the entire church at Rome, says: "I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another" (Romans 15:14).

- Proverbs 12:1; 15:12; 15:22; 16:18; 18:21; 27:17
- Goal: Heaven (John 15:16: fruit that will last)
- Sin's consequence is eternal death (Romans 6:23)

### 1. Guilt vs. Guilty Feelings

a.) David's progression of sin (2 Samuel 11:1): no focus, lust, adultery, deceit, lies and murder.

b.) Nathan confronts David (2 Samuel 12:1-7, 13): Confrontation is necessary whether you think a person will put up resistance or not.

c.) We must love a person's soul more than we love the relationship with them. Interestingly, David later names one of his sons with Bathsheba, Nathan!

- Guilt is a fact.
- Feelings need to be there (Psalms 38:1-11; 51:1-17).
- Some have false guilty feelings.

### 2. How people hide sin (as well as signs of sin):

a.) Rationalizations

b.) Flippancy: make light or laugh

c.) Independent spirit

d.) Anger: wall, upset
e.) Depression: wall, too much sleep
f.) Many words (Proverbs 10:19)
g.) Always saying "I'm doing great."

*Remember: We are family...never accept the "It is none of your business" attitude. When you counsel, "Follow your gut."*

### 3. Steps in Counseling and Instructing Brothers

a.) Initiate with love.
b.) Listen.
c.) Probe: Ask questions that are very specific. Do not jump to conclusions (Proverbs 18:17).
d.) Confront and help others to have "a broken and contrite heart" by using Scripture.
e.) Point to God and person sinned against (hurt).
f.) Offer forgiveness from God.
g.) Give hope of change.
h.) Be specific about ways to achieve behavioral change.

### 4. Areas to Probe (Never Assume)

a.) Laziness (Prov. 13:4)
b.) Lack of discipline: schedule
c.) Lack of growth (Hebrews 5:11-14; 2:1)
d.) Finances
e.) Lust/sex: especially dating relationships. Get specific: French kissing, petting, parked cars, alone in room
f.) The tongue: gossip, arguments, swearing, violence
g.) Marriage: frequency (1 Corinthians 7:2-5)
h.) Gluttony: eating disorders (Titus 1:12)
i.) Pride: high/low self-esteem (Romans 12:3)
j.) Amount of alcohol consumption
k.) Timidity (Rev. 21:8)
l.) Health: physical exams
m.) Ungratefulness: bitterness (Hebrews 12:15)

**The Struggle:** Colossians 1:28-2:1
**The Reward:** Fruit that will last

## LESSON 6

# AUTHORITY
# A Test for the Disciple's Heart

All authority in heaven and on earth is from God (Romans 13:1). This is God's umbrella of authority. Though not all authorities are righteous, to step out from under any umbrella of authority is to step out of God's plan and protection.

### 1. Umbrellas of God's Authority

a.) Jesus is over everything for the sake of the church
  1.) Matthew 28:18-20
  2.) Colossians 1:15-18
  3.) Ephesians 1:19b-23: Johannesburg and apartheid; Moscow and the coup; Hong Kong and the 1997 Treaty.
b.) Government: Romans 13:1-7
c.) Masters (employers, teachers, coaches): Colossians 3:22-24
d.) Husbands
  1.) Ephesians 5:22-25
  2.) Ephesians 5:21
    (There are times the husband submits.)

e.) Parents: Ephesians 6:1-3

f.) Church leaders: Hebrews 13:17 (including family group leaders and Bible talk leaders)

g.) The evangelist: 1 Timothy 1:3, 4:11-12, 6:17-19; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2; Titus 1:5, especially note vss. 10-16, 2:15

h.) The elders: 1 Timothy 5:17-19

*God's people need to learn to respect authority, rather than resenting it and trying to work around it.*

**2. We are not to abuse authority**

a.) The world abuses authority (Matthew 20:25-28)

b.) In the kingdom authority can and should be delegated to effectively lead and care for the needs of groups of followers of God (Exodus 18:13-26).

1.) Explain: Kingdom - World Sector Leaders, World Sector Administrators, Geographic Sector Leaders

2.) Churches: super region, region, sector, zone, family group, Bible talk leaders

**3. Our ultimate authority on earth is the word of God: (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**

a.) Anyone has the authority to call others to follow God's word in general or a specific scripture (1 John 2:6).

b.) However, there are many references on how (with what attitude) we are to do this, for example 1 Timothy 5:1-2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.

**4. One-on-one discipling (discipleship partners) is a great way to implement Matthew 28:20.**

a.) Discipling relationships should be based on friendship, not authority (meet weekly/daily contact).

b.) It is our teaching that it is best *not* to give a discipler any authority other than the Bible or what the leadership has collectively called the group to do, i.e. church attendance, tithing, etc. Most one-year-old disciples do not have the maturity to handle authority wisely.

c.) Learn to discern between matters of opinion and scriptural command (Romans 14:1, 17-19).

*(A special thank you to Al Baird who helped me prepare this lesson. His patience in teaching me with the Word, his counsel and his life, have revolutionized my convictions on God's teaching on authority.)*

## LESSON 7

# GROUP DISCIPLESHIP
# Discipling Jesus' Way

There is power in a group. The modern world recognizes this with weight-loss groups, addiction groups, sports training, etc.

**1. Group Identity** - Mark 3:13-14: Apostles (messengers), i.e. Yankee Pinstripes, Dodger Blue, Celtic Green, Bulls' Red and Black

**2. Group Purpose**

a.) Mark 3:13-14

1.) To be with him

2.) Sent out to preach

3.) Requires time

b.) Restated over and over again (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

c.) Group discipling is not *a* plan of God, but part of *the* plan of God.

**3. Group Within a Group**

a.) John: closest friend and brother (John 13:23, 19:26, 21:7, 21:20)

b.) Peter, James and John: Inner circle (Mark 5:37, 9:2, 14:32-33)

1.) This is not favoritism but focusing on a few.

2.) These men became key leaders of early church.

c.) Focused on these levels: (1, 3, 12, 72, 120), but he did not neglect the crowds

**4. Group Interaction - Matthew 16:13-27**

a.) Not as much one-on-one

b.) Saves time

c.) More powerful to be discipled in front of people (positive example was Peter walking on the water)

d.) More powerful to see others discipled

e.) Group questions and discussions teach truth. "What did you learn?" (Mark 10:35-44)

**5. Group Training - John 3:3ff, 5ff, 16ff, 22ff, 4:1-2**

a.) Serving (John 13:1-17)

b.) Accountability (Mark 6:30)

**6. Group Faithfulness**

a.) Luke 22:31-32: Jesus charges Peter to keep "the group" faithful.

b.) Groups help people to have relationships with one another, not just with the leader.

c.) If you get bad attitudes against one person, leader, or others, it pulls you back. The more relationships, the greater one's chances of remaining faithful.

**7. Group Multiplication**

a.) From 12 to 72 - Luke 10:1-3

b.) Focused on multiplying: Accountability on it (Luke 10:17)

c.) Acts 2:42-47

**8. Group Fruitfulness - Acts 2, 4, 5, 6**

a.) Unity is our witness to a lost world that Jesus is the Christ.

b.) Not discouraged, not alone, but together in hard times

c.) Teams lead churches—yes, need point man, but also team, for example the Jerusalem church, the Antioch church (Acts 13:1-2), the Boston church, the LA church. Team approach produces a "think tank" where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts—synergy.

LESSON 8

# FAMILY DISCIPLING
## The Acid Test

No one knows us better than our physical families. If you can convert them, you have passed the acid test of the reality of your walk with Jesus (Acts 1:12-14). Sometimes your family's hearts will be hard. We have no record of Paul converting all his family, but we do see his influence on his nephew in Acts 23:16.

### 1. God's Priority of Family

a.) Luke 14:25-26; Matthew 10:34-39
  1.) Teaching
  2.) We have lost God's perspective.
b.) Example of Jesus' interaction in a family: Luke 10:38-41
c.) Mark 3:20-21,31-34
  1.) Jesus' conflict in priorities and in schedule
  2.) John 7:1-10

- Convictions bring conflict and nondisciples will not understand our ways.
- Bottom line, Jesus' life and teaching converted his family.

### 2. God's Plan for Family

a.) Ephesians 5:21-33
  1.) Goal: Get each other to heaven
  2.) Dating: Does this person help me spiritually?
  3.) Your spouse should call you higher in bearing fruit.
  4.) Marriage challenges
    - Best friends, but not all needs met there
    - Weekly discipleship time: set a specific time
    - Pray together daily: at night?
    - Work as team to be fruitful (Acts 18:24-26)
    - Openness and accountability with another couple with absolutely no topics off limits for discussion, i.e. the past, arguments, sex, schedule, finances...
  5.) Single parents: meet needs, especially dates
b.) Deuteronomy 6:4-12
  1.) Do not forget the Lord.
  2.) Daily devotionals for younger kids; weekly devotionals for older kids: call for "excellence in everything"
  3.) Get discipling on parenting because you have never been there before—each age brings new challenges
  4.) Help choose discipleship partners for kids and make time to spend with each child. Talk to them but not necessarily to disciple them.
  5.) Let your children see you evangelize and help them to be fruitful. Remind them often of the family's purpose.
  6.) Build memories like a family scrapbook. (The Bible is God's!)
  7.) Children raised in the Lord will want to become disciples (Proverbs 22:6).

### Closing Thoughts of the Discipleship Series

Quickly review each lesson. Discipleship is hard. There is a cross to bear daily, but God will see us through (Matthew 11:28-30). Close with the reading of "Footprints."

## Footprints

One night a man had a dream.
He dreamed he was walking along the beach with
the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.
For each scene, he noticed two sets of
footprints in the sand;
one belonged to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him,
he looked back at the footprints in the sand.
He noticed that many times along the path
of his life there was only one set of footprints.
He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest
and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him
and he questioned the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you,
you'd walk with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during the most troublesome
times in my life there is only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed you most,
you would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child,
I love you and would never leave you.
During your times of trial and suffering,
when you see only one set of footprints,
it was then that I carried you."

*—Anonymous*

# *Discipling*
# A Study Guide

**by Brian Felushko**

A study guide based on the book *Discipling: God's Plan to Train and Transform His People* by Gordon Ferguson (Woburn, Mass.: Discipleship Publications International, 1997)

# Introduction

To get the most out of any written material, we not only need to read it carefully, but we also need to reflect deeply and personally on it. Gordon Ferguson's book, *Discipling,* is not only insightful, timely and most importantly, biblically based, but mastering its concepts is essential to our spiritual life, growth and impact. Reading Gordon's book and the scriptures he uses is good; but reflecting on these scriptures and the points and practical applications made from them, is much better. That is the purpose of this study guide. Each of us needs take it deeper and make radical, permanent changes in our attitude and life-style.

In order to get the most out of this study guide, I would recommend following these guidelines:

1. Before answering any questions from the study guide, read the entire chapter of Gordon's book and all scripture references first. Then use the questions presented here to help you dig more deeply into the book and the Bible. Reread any portions of the chapter or any scriptures, as needed.

2. It is not intended that you necessarily cover a chapter and its questions in a day. Go at your own pace. Be thorough. Get personal. Don't be legalistic. If you need to spend more time on one chapter or question than another, do it!

3. Get a notebook, and give it a title like, *Discipling: Personal Notes and Reflections.* Answer all questions in writing. (Writing out your answers will take the truth of your convictions much deeper into your heart and life.)

4. Share what you are learning with those who are closest to you. Talk about your new convictions. Commit yourself to changing by asking for input and accountability on your decisions. *Talk about your reading of this book with your discipling partners on an ongoing basis.*

5. Each day before you pick up the book, the study guide and the Bible, pray, asking God to open your heart to what he wants you to see, learn and change. After you have spent some great time reading, reflecting and writing, spend more time in prayer seeking the faith, courage and integrity to put God's will into practice in your life.

## CHAPTER ONE

# Jesus–The Master Discipler

1. Someone once said, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day; I'd rather have someone walk with me than merely point the way." The point is that we learn much better by seeing than hearing and that we need others to show us how to live through their example. Do you think Jesus would agree? How do you know? (See pages 19-25.)

2. How did Jesus train the Twelve to be committed disciples? (See pages 22-25.)

3. How did Paul train Timothy and others to be committed disciples? (See pages 26-28.)

4. What was Timothy told to do in order to train others to be committed disciples? (See 2 Timothy 2:2.)

5. Someone once wrote that Jesus' method for evangelizing the world was simply men. (Reread that sentence if you need to.) How has God used people to help you to become a disciple and to teach you how to live as a disciple? How is God using you to do the same with others?

## CHAPTER TWO

# Discipling and One-Another Relationships

1. The "one-another passages" in the New Testament are not suggestions or great ideas; they are commands from God about the kind of relationships we must have in the body of Christ. How do our discipling relationships help us to take these one-another passages seriously?

2. How are you doing with obeying these commands in your discipling relationships? In order to get an honest picture of how biblical your closest relationships are, use the one-another commands that Gordon focuses on as a means to evaluate each of your relationships.

3. Once you have completed this personal analysis, over the next few days ask these disciples how they see you doing in your obedience to each of these commands in your relationship with them. If these people are honest with you (and they should be because they are Christians!) their feedback, while challenging, will help you to grow in your love.

## CHAPTER THREE

# Biblical Principles of Discipling

1. How would you respond to someone who said that discipling relationships are not biblical? How would you show that these relationships are essential to pleasing God?

2. Which one of the Old Testament passages that Gordon refers to stands out to you the most and why?

3. What is your attitude toward "open rebuke"? Can you think of a time when a rebuke changed your life by saving you from ongoing sin? How did you feel about that rebuke then? How do you feel about it now?

4. Christ expects his disciples to learn to obey everything he taught and to become mature in their faith. Why is it essential that we each have specific people continually involved in our lives?

5. How grateful are you for the discipler(s) God has put in your life? Take some time to list how your discipler(s) has helped you to become more like Jesus.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# A Theological Basis for Discipling Relationships

Gordon makes the point that discipling relationships are essential due to the nature of God himself. Three aspects of his nature that compel us to develop deep spiritual relationships are that:

a. "relationship" defines the very nature of God;

b. "God is love," and love is putting the needs of others ahead of our own and;

c. discipling relationships require us to have the qualities that God expects and rewards: faith and humility.

1. Do you see that Christianity without deeply personal and ongoing relationships is inconsistent with the very nature of God? Given God's nature, it would be impossible for him to call us to follow him and yet not expect us to be committed to discipling relationships. Whether or not this point is clear to you, discuss "the nature of God and discipling relationships" with someone today.

2. What aspects of man's nature make it essential that we develop deep, spiritual relationships with other disciples? (Hint: Gordon draws attention to two potential strong qualities and two inherent weaknesses.)

3. What is true about the nature of the church (as God intended) that, once again, necessitates our commitment to developing deep, spiritual relationships?

4. In this chapter what point(s) convicted, convinced or excited you the most about the necessity of discipling relationships? What are you going to do today to demonstrate your new-found or deepened convictions?

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Being Discipled– Jesus Is the Focus

1. The goal of being a disciple of Jesus is to become as much like Jesus as possible in every aspect of our lives (Luke 6:40). Can you honestly say that this is the goal of your life?

2. If we are going to follow Jesus, we must do so on his terms. Using your own study and Gordon's comments on the three passages in John, evaluate how you are really doing as a disciple of Jesus. What are your strengths as a disciple? What are your weaknesses? How are you going to turn your weaknesses into strengths? Talk to your discipler to put a plan together.

3. What is your response to the following statements:

a. "Similarly, if a person wants to be as much like Jesus as possible, discipling-partner relationships will be very welcome." (p. 94)

b. "Being a disciple means that we will love being trained. If we are disciples we will love being discipled. We will seek it out, submit joyfully to it,

and trust God to refine our characters and to supply through others the specifics needed..." (p. 96).

4. Do you love being trained? What would your discipleship partner say?

## CHAPTER SIX
## Being Discipled– Why Is It Important?

1. What are the four reasons that Gordon states for the importance of discipling in our lives?

2. Why is it hard to stay focused as a disciple? What two things are we to stay focused on? How has discipling helped you to stay focused?

3. How does discipling protect us from Satan? What must we do if discipling is going to help us to overcome our sin?

4. Character is the result of inherent tendencies and external influences. With God's word and Jesus' life as the standards, each one of us can accurately evaluate our character strengths and weaknesses. List what you believe to be your two greatest strengths and your two greatest weaknesses. Share your evaluation with your discipling partner and be open to his/her feedback and input.

5. Do you believe that you can change your character to become more like Jesus? Do you believe that you need people involved in your life on a daily basis to help bring about these changes? What are you going to do today to help people help you to change?

6. Define "battleship discipleship." To what degree does this term describe your discipling relationship? What are you going to do today so that this term does not in any way describe your discipling relationship?

## CHAPTER SEVEN
## Being Discipled– The Keys to Success

1. In your communication in your closest relationships, how open are you about what is really going on in your heart? Why is it essential that we get open and stay open in order to grow as disciples? What do you need to get open about today?

2. There can be no doubt that seeking and following advice is biblically mandated! What is going on in your life right now that you need to seek advice about? What advice have you been given that you need to take more seriously? List the practical suggestions that Gordon gives for seeking and taking advice. (See pages 114-115.) Is this how you have approached getting advice?

3. Submission is an ugly word in the world. Yet submission expresses the very heart and life of our Lord. What is your attitude toward being submissive? How much do you want to become someone who is known for his/her submission?

4. Why do we find it hard to imitate those whom God has put in our lives to lead us? List the things you are specifically imitating in your discipling partner's life. If it is a struggle to come up with a list here, then you are not focused on imitation. What do you need to do today to start obeying the Bible and imitating the leader that God has put in your life?

5. How does each one of the examples in 2 Timothy 2:1-7 (i.e., soldier, athlete and farmer) illustrate different yet complementary aspects of being reliable? Based on these examples, how reliable are you? Why is reliability essential to being successfully discipled?

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# Being Discipled– The Practicals

1. How do you really feel about the organization of discipling relationships? Why is it essential that we organize these relationships instead of just hoping they will begin, develop and mature? What does trusting in the sovereignty of God have to do with joyfully accepting organization?

2. Would you say that you and your discipling partner are friends? What do you need to do to build a great friendship with the person discipling you? How are you doing at sharing your life in the four ways Gordon lists on page 127? Why is friendship essential to effective discipling?

3. Do you expect your discipling partner to change your character, never sin against you or make a mistake, or always be available whenever you think you need him/her? Are any unreasonable expectations negatively affecting your discipling relationship?

4. Comment on the statement, "If you do not like accountability, you have a spiritual problem, period." Why is accountability necessary if we are going to become our best for God? In what areas do you want and need more accountability?

5. Would you say that you make enough effort to be in touch with your discipling partner daily? If not, why do you think that that is the case? Do you have a weekly, scheduled discipling time? If not, make that a priority this week. How spiritual do you think your discipling times are? What can you do to make your discipling times more powerful and life changing?

## CHAPTER NINE

# Be a Relationship Builder

1. Define the term "spiritual leadership." How is it different from worldly leadership?

2. What are the three kinds of authority found in relationships? Which two kinds of authority should almost certainly characterize discipling relationships?

3. Paul did a great job "discipling" the Christians in Thessalonica. Whether you disciple others right now or not, evaluate your relationships with other disciples in each area Gordon has highlighted.

a. Do you tend more to compliment or criticize?

b. Do you clearly communicate your intentions and ideas? Is your communication direct?

c. Are you gentle, motivated by a desire to meet the needs of others?

d. Do you share your life freely and openly?

e. Do you find it easy to personally sacrifice in order to meet needs?

f. Do you lead by example? Could you call others to imitate you as you imitate Christ?

g. Do you tend to be sentimental or unsympathetic in helping others with their struggles?

4. It is vital that we not only reflect deeply on these questions but that we get input from others who know us and our relationships. Seek input on how you can be a better relationship builder.

## CHAPTER TEN
# Be a Patient Trainer

1. See Romans 12:1-2 and Ephesians 4:20-24.

a. What is the relationship between how we think and how we live?

b. Why is it so important that we learn to think spiritually? How do we learn to think spiritually?

c. What does our attitude need to be as we help other disciples to think as God does?

2. How challenging is it for you to "speak the truth in love?"

a. Do you tend to be harsh in your discipling of others?

b. Do you keep what others share with you in confidence or do you tend to gossip?

c. Why is the Golden Rule so important in these issues of discipling?

3. What qualities in your life would demonstrate that you are "leaving room for God" to work in your discipling relationships? How obvious are these qualities in your life right now?

4. Reading and reflecting on this chapter has probably surfaced or highlighted some areas of weakness and/or sin in your approach to discipling. Share your convictions with your discipler and start making a concerted effort to turn these weaknesses into strengths.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN
# Be a Humble Advisor

1. Gordon calls us to consider five questions on pages 168-169 regarding our giving and taking of advice. He states, "Your answers to these questions will tell you a great deal about your leadership, your followership and your heart. Don't take them lightly." Spend some time reflecting on and answering these questions honestly. Think of specific, recent examples for each question. Don't answer the way you know you should be, but rather what your most recent actions have shown you to be.

2. Get input from those who know you best. What kind of advice giver and advice seeker are you?

## CHAPTER TWELVE
# Be a Graceful Leader

1. How well do you think you understand and appreciate God's grace in your life? Do you work in order to be saved, or do you work because you are saved? When you "mess up" do you truly believe that God reaches out to you or that God is disgusted with you?

2. When disciples you are leading sin, how do you respond to them? Do you become angry, frustrated, cold, silent and distant, or do you reach out to help them deal spiritually with their sin? See 1 John 2:1-2.

3. How quick are those whom you disciple to confess their sins to you? How does that reflect on how graceful you are with them?

4. What expectations do you have for each person you disciple? Are they reasonable expectations? Are they great expectations? Have you discussed these expectations with them?

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN
## Who Has Authority?

1. List and define (again) the three kinds of authority that Gordon makes reference to.

2. What scriptures convince you that God has ordained the exercise of authority in his church? How would you use these or other scriptures to help someone who would claim that the use of authority in the church is not of God?

3. How does the pattern of leadership established by Moses in Exodus 18 relate to the pattern of leadership in the church today?

4. Would you say that you have a submissive heart in your relationships with those who are leaders in the church? Use Gordon's description of "what submission is not" and "what submission is" on pages 198-9 to help you answer this question. If not, what do you think is your main struggle with being submissive? Ask one of your leaders what they have seen in your life in relation to being a submissive follower.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN
## The Challenge of Change

1. To what degree is change a challenge for you? In what area(s) have you found change to be the greatest challenge?

2. Think about some changes that have taken place in your life lately. How did you handle them? If you could face those same changes again, how would you handle them differently?

3. What is the most significant spiritual quality that is needed to help us face and handle change in a victorious way? How strong is this quality in your life?

4. Of what spiritual benefit is change in our lives? In other words, how does God use change to help us grow and become more like Jesus?

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN
## Group Discipling

1. I'm sure some readers have never experienced discipling in a group setting, and it may be hard to imagine what that would be like or how it could be more helpful. A lot of us would rather receive our discipling one-on-one. Which approach would you prefer and why?

2. Why did Jesus often disciple the apostles in group settings? What benefits were there to that kind of approach? Try putting yourself in the apostles' situation and think back through each of the examples of group discipling Gordon refers to in this chapter. How would you feel and respond to this kind of group discipling?

3. If you've been fortunate enough to be involved in group discipling, what do you see, from your experience, are some of the challenges and some of the benefits?

4. What are some ways that you can use group discipling more effectively?

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN
# Family Discipling

1. Based on the practical direction Gordon gives in this chapter, evaluate how discipling is going in each of these areas of your life:

a. being discipled in your marriage and parenting

b. discipling times with your spouse

c. discipling times with your children

2. What specific things can you do or change to enhance discipling and thus growth in each of these crucial areas?

3. Recommendation: Write down in the back of your date book the format suggested by Wyndam Shaw for discipling times with your spouse and commit to following that format (unless you have another similar one that you follow already).

## SUMMARY

1. What would you say are the most important things you have learned about discipling from reading and reflecting on Gordon's book?

2. What changes are you making or will you make in order to more closely follow and obey God's plan for discipling in your life?

3. How committed are you to putting into practice the biblical principles of discipling in a greater and more serious way than ever before?

4. How would you share with any one who is skeptical or negative about why you are personally so committed to the daily practice of discipling?

# Powerful Preaching Made Practical

**by Gordon Ferguson**

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I

# Basic Types of Sermons/Lessons

**A. Narrative** (or story telling) - using a Bible passage or several passages to develop a practical story.

1. *Advantages:*
   a. Can be very interesting and inspirational.
   b. Makes the Bible seem especially relevant and real.
2. *Disadvantages:*
   a. Takes a skilled speaker and very careful preparation.
   b. Lacks the power of reading and explaining specific scriptures.
   c. The listener is not likely to remember exact scriptures (nor key points).
   d. The speaker may be the focus more than God in the minds of those listening.

**B. Topical** - selecting a topic or subject and using any relevant Scriptures to develop the lesson. (For example, "Grab an idea, and go everywhere preaching the Word.")

1. *Advantages:*
   a. Application to specific, perceived needs is readily accomplished.
   b. Outlines can be quickly developed. (For example, think up three points, get a poem, and let 'er rip!)
2. *Disadvantages:*
   a. Is too dependent on the judgment of the speaker (mostly meets needs obvious to him).
   b. Does not offer enough in-depth Scripture teaching.
   c. Can be difficult to follow (not easy to jump around to different passages).
   d. Can easily become a crutch to the speaker who tends to procrastinate in sermon preparation.

**C. Multi-Text** - preaching several texts which explain a given subject area somewhat equally, such as the characteristics of a disciple in the book of John (8:31-32; 13:34-35; 15:1-8)

1. *Advantages:*
   a. Much more biblically focused than the foregoing types.
   b. Listeners remember more Scripture and more of its in-depth explanation.
   c. Often has more the "ring of authority" to it, especially to a visitor who is less convicted about the authority of Scripture anyway.
   d. Done correctly, the speaker must study the Bible more in-depth to prepare the sermon.
2. *Disadvantages:*
   a. If prepared inadequately, may seem more tedious and less interesting.
   b. For newer visitors, can be harder to find the different passages (if different biblical books are used for the texts).
   c. While it provides more in-depth learning of Scripture than the previous sermon types, it is somewhat *less* than the textual type of sermon.

**D. Textual (or expository)** - a more in-depth development of one passage into all of the main points in the sermon.

1. *Advantages:*
   a. By design, the most detailed study of a biblical text.
   b. More of the Scripture will remain in the memory of the hearer, as will the

other parts of the lesson emphasized. (A later reading of the text itself tends to remind the hearer of the applications made in the sermon).

c. The visitors will be more convicted about the authority of the Word.

d. The speaker will become a deeper student of the Word.

e. By presenting one text, God can meet needs in the audience that the speaker may not perceive himself.

2. *Disadvantages:*

a. The only real disadvantage is that of inadequate preparation on the part of the speaker.

b. To the extent the speaker is not adequately *trained in* developing such lessons, the end result can be less than excellent—and time-consuming in preparation, as well.

c. Therefore, a very practical and systematic approach to textual sermon development will be offered in the following pages!

d. Two basic needs of the speaker will be met: the quest for excellence and the saving of much preparation time.

## II

# Finding a Sermon/Lesson Idea

### A. Assigned to you

1. Title (use key words to direct your development of the speech)
2. General idea
3. Occasion and audience
4. Problem to address
5. Passage
6. Combination of some of the above

### B. Discovered by you

1. Basic human need
2. Flash of inspiration (write down immediately)
3. Personal contact or experience
4. Planning notebook (seed ideas)
5. Scripture reading and study
6. Previously used ideas (with fresh approach)
7. Combination of some of the above

## III

# Selecting an Appropriate Scripture Passage

### A. Find one which corresponds as closely to your speech idea as possible.

### B. How to find such a passage:

1. Own knowledge of the Bible
2. Advice from others
3. Aids such as a topical Bible, a concordance or other spiritual books

## IV

# Studying the Passage Selected

### A. Be careful not to *force* it to exactly correspond with your idea (study it in *context).*

### B. Creative research includes:

1. Read the passage several times in your favorite translation.

2. Read it in other translations.
3. Write out an initial application of the individual verses and passage as a whole.
4. Using reference materials, study more in depth the background of the passage and the Bible book in which it is found.
5. Background of the Bible book includes:
   a. Information about the author
   b. Information about the original recipients
   c. Date and purpose of writing
   d. Literary style of the book
   e. Data about times during which book was written
   f. Key characteristics of the book; issues and problems treated within the book—for example, the epistles of John are dealing with the Gnostic heresy.
6. Background of Bible passage includes:
   a. Historical factors (customs, politics, etc.) - example: Engagements in the first-century Jewish culture were binding to the point that a break up necessitated a divorce (Matthew 1:19).
   b. Grammatical factors - example: In 1 John 1:7, the verb tense of the word "purifies" indicates a continual action. Thus, as we *walk* in the light, the blood of Jesus washes our sins away on a continual basis.
   c. Dictionary factor (specific meaning of key words) - example: the word "justification" is a legal term in the original language meaning "innocent" or "not guilty." Therefore, a Christian has an absolutely right standing before God.
   d. Cross-reference factor (parallel or closely related passages) - example: Let "the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16) is paralleled with "being filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18-19).
   e. Literary factor (type of language) - example: Matthew 24 uses apocalyptic language. Thus, an attempt to interpret the symbolic language literally will lead to incorrect conclusions.

### C. Developing conclusions of study

1. State exact meaning of passage in context (to the original readers - God's *then*).
2. State how it applies to your audience (God's *now*).
3. State your purpose(s) in using it (what do you hope to accomplish?).
4. Do your study early enough to allow time for maturing the speech (through prayer, meditation, discussion with others).

**D. Note:** The more familiar you are with a text to begin with, the less in-depth you *may* need to study it. However, more in-depth study, even of a familiar passage, always provides fresh insight and confidence. Better too much study than too little!

## V

## Outlining the Speech

The importance of logical outlining cannot be overstated. It enables the speaker to remember the outline without frequent reference to his notes. Also, the hearers will remember the main points much better afterwards.

**A. Select a working title** which basically encapsulates the meaning and purpose of the passage studied (if desired, a public title can be used for interest's sake).

**B. Main points** (Roman-numeral points) should equally relate to the title and divide or explain it.

1. Make them very distinct in the presentation.
2. No automatic transmission transitions! Use a stick shift and let the audience recognize the transitions.

**C. Sub-points** should do the same in dividing or explaining each of the main points.

**D. Development of support material** from text selected or from other passages.

1. *Explicit* information from the exact *text* is most helpful.
2. Next use *explicit* information from immediate *context* (surrounding verses).
3. *Implicit* information from both text and context is fine to use, but the more obvious the points are, the better for the audience (easier to see and trust).
4. Cross-references from other parts of the Bible can be used for support, explanation, and application as needed.

**E. Include the practicals** within the outline of the body of the speech: explanations, applications and illustrations.

**F. Explanations:**

1. Explain whatever may be unclear to your particular audience.
2. Some items needing explanation may be the background of the passage or book if relevant to the purpose of your lesson (definitions, grammar construction, context, etc.).

**G. Applications:**

1. Make it personal and specific.
2. Show why your listeners should act on the lesson point and *how* to act.
3. Even if the point is very convicting, make it *positive* and *inspirational!*

**H. Illustrations:**

1. *Types*- object lessons; hymns and poetry; facts and figures; personal experience; anecdotes; testimony of others; humor; poetic speech; other quotations.
2. *Sources*- Bible, science, literature of all types, history, personal experiences, sports, current events, arts, visual sources (movies, TV), politics, other lessons you have heard.

**I. Conclusion:**

1. Summarize main points of sermon body.
2. Make a final application of the purpose(s) of the sermon (a great illustration is often very effective at this time).
3. Make a final *appeal* to act on what they have learned (be specific and inspirational).

**J. Introduction:**

1. This part of the outline will normally be developed last because you then know fully what you are introducing!

2. Begin by gaining both attention and interest (the use of questions or illustrations is an excellent way to accomplish this goal).
3. Next, introduce the *subject* of the sermon (normally you mention both title and text).
4. Finally, provide a logical transition to the body (main points) of sermon.

## VI

# Sample Outline as a Demonstration of the Outlining Process

### DEATH TO SELFISHNESS (Philippians 2:1-18)

**Introduction:**

1. If you had to pick out what your top three sinful tendencies are, what would your answer be?

2. How many of you thought "selfishness"? (I did; pride and selfishness are both ingrained in my sinful nature!)

3. Thankfully, we can crucify these sins with the help of God.

4. Turn to Philippians 2:1-18 for some great direction in developing unselfishness.

**Body:**

**I. Develop Unselfish Attitudes (vv. 1-11)**

A. Concentrate on love and unity (vv. 1-2).

B. Concentrate on the needs of others (vv. 3-4).

C. Concentrate on the example of Christ (vv. 5-11).

1. He was humble.
2. He was sacrificed.
3. He was rewarded (see 1 Peter 5:5-6).

**II. Develop Unselfish Actions (vv. 12-13)**

A. Obedience is demanded (v. 12).

1. Even when no one is checking up on you, obey.
2. It is *your* salvation; take responsibility.
3. Be sober: *"fear and trembling."*

B. Obedience is possible through God (v. 13).

1. He creates righteous desires in us through his Word.
2. He provides the power to follow through by his Spirit (Ephesians 3:16-21).

**III. Develop Unselfish Speech (vv. 14-18)**

A. Disciples are not *complainers!* (vv. 14-15).

1. To stand out like *stars,* we must be different than the world!
2. See Ephesians 4:29-32.

B. Disciples are *communicators!* (We hold out the Word of life.)

**Conclusion:**

1. Death to selfishness can only be achieved when we replace it *with selflessness*!

2. Selflessness can be defined as unselfish attitudes, actions and speech.

3. What do you most need to change in these areas?

4. Write out a plan; share it with a friend; and then let's die to selfishness!

## VII

# A Practical Approach to Developing Basic Text Outlines Quickly

A. An experienced, trained speaker can develop the main points from a Scripture passage quickly.

B. The easiest way to learn this approach is to begin with one verse and obtain all main points from the verse.

C. Once this approach is effectively used on shorter texts, the length of the passages developed should gradually increase.

D. The following examples are given to illustrate this approach with increasingly longer texts.

1. The sample brief outlines will use texts of one verse, two verses, a paragraph and then one chapter (or multi-paragraph).
2. Once the basic outline and title is developed, then the other details can be added much more easily.
3. Notice the principles of outlining being used (especially in the way the titles capture the basic thrust of the passages used, and in the way the main points equally relate to each other in breaking down the title).
4. Keep in mind that there are no absolutes in such development of texts as far as the wording of the titles and main points are concerned. (It may be a matter of good, better and best, or simply a matter of personal preference.)

## VIII

# Sample Basic Text Outline

### A. One-Verse Sample

**A SPIRITUAL CHOICE**

(Joshua 24:15)

I. The Choice Is *Demanded* (*Choose!*)
II. The Choice Is *Personal* (Choose for *yourselves*)
III. The Choice Is *Urgent* (*This day*)
IV. The Choice Is *Inevitable* (*Whom*—not *if*)

### B. Two-Verse Sample

**GREAT CERTAINTIES OF LIFE**

(Hebrews 9:27-28)

I. The Certainty of Death (v. 27a)
II. The Certainty of Judgment (v. 27b)
III. The Certainty of Salvation (v. 28a)
IV. The Certainty of Christ's Return (v. 28b)

### C. Paragraph Sample

**CHRIST, THE MIGHTY DESTROYER**

(Hebrews 2:14-18)

I. Christ Destroyed Man's Enemy (v. 14)
II. Christ Destroys Man's Fears (v. 15)
III. Christ Destroyed Man's Sins (v. 17)
IV. Christ Destroys Man's Weakness (v. 18)

### D. Multi-Paragraph Sample

**FROM MIRE TO MAJESTY**

(Luke 15:11-24)

I. Wake up! (vv. 11-17)
II. Get Up! (v. 20)
III. 'Fess Up! (vv. 18, 19, 21)
IV. Live It Up! (vv. 22-24)

NOTE: Catchy title and main points can be used effectively to heighten interest and increase memory. However, it can be taken too far, as the following outline of the same text illustrates:

I. His Madness
   A. He wanted his tin.
   B. He surrendered to sin.
   C. He gave up his kin.

II. His Badness
A. He went to the dogs.
B. He ate with the hogs.
C. He hocked all his togs.

III. His Gladness
A. He was given the seal.
B. He ate up the veal.
C. He danced a reel.

## IX

# Assignments For Developing Your Own Skills

### A. Study the passage

1. Using the approach described in IV, study 1 Corinthians 10:1-13.
2. To correctly interpret the passage, you need to study it in the overall context of chapters 8-10.
3. Take the time to follow the approach closely—otherwise you will miss the depth of the passage itself.

### B. Explanations:

1. Which of the main points in each of the four sample sermons will most likely need more detailed explanation?
2. Explain why you made your choice in each case.
3. Provide an approach to explaining each of those four points (one per sermon).
4. Use the principles suggested in V, F.

### C. Applications:

1. Similarly, develop one application for each of the main points in the same sermons
2. Use the principles suggested in V, G.

### D. Illustrations:

1. Come up with one illustration for each of the main points (Roman numerals) in the four sample sermons.
2. Refer back to V, H and use different *types* and *sources* of illustrations. (We tend to use the same type(s) repeatedly.)

**E. Write a conclusion** for each of the four sample sermons using the guidelines explained in V, I.

**F. Write an introduction** for each of the four sample sermons using the guidelines explained in V, J.

**G. Develop a brief text outline** (similar to the four sample outlines: title and main points) for each of the following texts:

1. Hebrews 12:11
2. 1 John 2:15-17
3. Colossians 4:2-6
4. 2 Corinthians 4:1-8

**H. Finally, develop a complete textual sermon outline** using all of the principles that have been taught in this material.

1. Assigned subject: "The Joy of Jesus"
2. The rest is up to you! A disciple is a *learner*—demonstrate what you have learned!

# Preaching Evaluation Form

(Ask others to use this to give you feedback.)

Name of Speaker:_____

Topic:_____ Date:_____

Impromptu or Prepared (circle one)

Scale of 1- 5 (5 = best; circle one)

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) Introduction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2) Explanation of Passage | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3) Application to Audience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4) Application to Self | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5) Conviction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6) Dynamism | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7) Humor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8) Effectiveness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9) Close | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10) Use of Time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments_____

_____

# Character Studies for Young Teens

# Introduction

The Character Study Series, comprised of ten lessons, was developed for young teens just coming into the teen ministry from the preteen class. A number of critical needs prompted this project. Too many preteens who have grown up in the church know all the right spiritual answers, but don't necessarily understand what it takes to have a heart for God and to have a deep, emotional relationship with him. Their parents and teen leaders can be fooled by their seeming innocence and eagerness and have a hard time identifying their sin and helping them to repent.

These studies will help mature young teenagers and develop in them the character they need before they begin the studies for those moving toward conversion (i.e. First Principles studies).

The character studies can also be used to help convict teenagers about a specific character trait they need to develop, even while they are involved the basic discipleship studies.

Character studies are also effective in helping teens who have already become disciples grow in their walk with God. They are perfectly suited for use during discipleship times.

It is our prayer that, while there is no single, guaranteed formula for studying with teenagers, these character studies will provide extra help for tailoring your studies to meet the needs of each individual teen.

Kris and I firmly believe these studies will help preteens make the transition into the teen ministry and then more readily enter into the Kingdom of God as sold-out disciples of Jesus.

*Phil and Kris Arsenault*
*Boston, USA*

## How to Use the Character Studies

First of all, explain the purpose of the character studies to the teenager if you are using the studies to build their character before they begin the First Principles study series. The teenager needs to be displaying a conscious effort and progress toward maturity.

In studying with the teenager, it is essential that you, as a leader, allow the teenager to answer the questions. Draw their hearts out by allowing them to respond (Proverbs 20:5). After they have responded, add what you see is also important and continue to ask stimulating questions to be sure they understand. Have a conviction that shallow and generic responses are unacceptable. When you ask a question, an example of a shallow response is, "I don't know the answer." Ask them if they would like to know, and help them search for the answer. Examples of generic responses are "I need to obey," "Because God says so," "The Bible," etc. Ask them *why* they need to obey, *why* God says so, and continue to ask these types of questions until you have truly drawn their hearts out. Help them to see that a relationship with God is not knowing the right information or doing things "because I have to." Rather, out of a sincerely loving relationship between the teen and God, they should *want* to do what God asks. They need to obey out of a willing spirit through an overflow of their personal love for God (Acts 13:22).

*At the end of each study, we've asked that the teenager write a one-page essay on what they've learned from the study.* They need to bring their essay to the next study for you to read. This will assist you in determining how much the teen is really learning and how much they are connecting with God. It also helps draw out the teen's heart through their own words.

Feel free to add your own scriptures, discussion or examples to the studies to most effectively meet the needs of the teenager you are working with.

Pray at the end of each study.

Finally, believe in each teen you are studying with–even when it takes months or years for them to connect with God in a heartfelt way. God's word will not return to him empty (Isaiah 55:11), and each study will plant seeds which will help them to develop a godly character.

## 1
## Honesty

*To the leader of the study:*

Honesty is a critical character trait to have as a teenager. One of the tendencies in the sinful nature of a teenager is to lie. Lying manifests itself in half-truths, exaggeration and deceit. The goal of this study is to free teens from the trap of lying and to help them see that honesty is absolutely God's way.

The more open you are about your life, the more open the teenager will be.

### Introduction

*Ask:*

1.) Why do teens lie?

*Some answers:*

a.) afraid of getting in trouble

b.) want to look good in front of others

c.) ashamed and embarrassed about something—*Leader of the study should share some lies they have told and why they told hem—even from their teen years.*

2.) To whom do teens lie?
   a.) authority figures (parents, teachers, ministry leaders, etc.)
   b.) friends
   c.) siblings

3.) What do they lie about?
   a.) performance (i.e., report cards, chores, Bible reading, sports performance, homework, etc.)
   b.) treatment of others

- The goal of this study is to get you to see that honesty is what God wants from you and that when you are honest, you are like God.

## The Scriptures

Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24

Name some different things God knows about you.

Why does it make sense to be honest all the time?
   a.) God knows and sees when we even just think about lying.
   b.) God knows and sees when we tell half-truths, when we exaggerate, when we're deceitful and when we blatantly lie.

- *Bottom line:* God knows everything about us. Lying to others instantly leads to lying to ourselves and ultimately, lying to God.

John 8:44

What can you learn from this Scripture?
   a.) Lying is Satan's language.
   b.) Satan is the father of lies.

- *Bottom line:* Satan is behind every lie.

Mark 7:22

How would you define "deceit"?
   a.) shading the truth
   b.) not telling the whole truth, usually to make yourself or a situation look better
   c.) not saying what you are really thinking, not being open (giving answers like "Fine," "okay," or "I don't know" when you know there's more in your heart)

- *Bottom line:* Saying what you are really thinking is very important because that's the only way you can get the spiritual help you need to be able to change your heart.

Revelation 21:8

Does God take lying seriously?
   Absolutely yes!

- *Bottom line:* Liars go to hell.

## Personal Heart-Check Questions

1.) When are you most tempted to lie?
2.) Are you willing to change your life and be totally honest all the time?

## Practical Applications

James 5:16

When you lie:
   a.) Confess it to the person you lied to.
   b.) Confess it to your parent(s) and/or teen leader.
   c.) Tell them that you are sorry and you want to change.
   d.) Then, go on your way happily and joyfully because you did what was right before God.

Write out one page about what you've learned from this study, some things you have done or will do differently because of this study, and how all this will help you be a disciple someday or how it will help you be a better disciple if you already are one.

## 2
# Humility

*To the leader of the study:*

Humility is essential in beginning and maintaining a relationship with God. Pride, the opposite of humility, is often difficult to see in oneself and difficult to define in one's character. It can be described as stubbornness toward God and his Word and others, or as independence from God or others.

Try to use specific examples of interactions you've observed between the teenager and others that show a lack of humility and share from your own life as well.

### Introduction

1.) What is pride?
   a.) being stubborn
   b.) thinking you are better than others or above others
   c.) thinking your ideas are best and that things should always go your way
   d.) not admitting wrongdoing or apologizing - *leader of the study should share how they were prideful as a teenager*

2.) What do you think humility is?
   *possible negative responses:*
   a.) being wimpy and letting people walk all over you
   b.) letting people tell you what to do
   c.) having no opinions

   *possible positive responses:*
   a.) listening to input and getting help from God and others
   b.) taking correction well
   c.) apologizing for sin

- The goal of this study is for you to see your pride so that you can humbly accept and respond to the word of God.

### The Scriptures

Philippians 2:5-8

How was Jesus humble?
   a.) He was God but became a man.
   b.) He became a servant when he could've been a ruler.
   c.) He *died* for others!

- *Bottom line:* To be like Jesus is to be humble.

Ephesians 4:2-3

How does God want us to get along and be unified with others?
   a.) be completely humble and gentle (no selfishness)
   b.) deal patiently with people
   c.) focus on our *love* for others so that we can bear with their faults

- *Bottom line:* To get along with others, we must put ourselves aside—that's what Jesus has done for us.

1 Peter 5:5-6

How can humility be like clothing?
   a.) put it on everyday before you go outside
   b.) not a natural part of us—has to be *put on* (thought about)

c.) should be the first thing people see about us

What is in store for the humble person?

a.) grace
b.) "lifted up"— growth and blessing
c.) relief because his burdens and anxieties will be carried by God instead of himself
d.) better relationships (As God opposes the proud, so do other people!)

- *Bottom line:* The humble person is on God's team.

### Personal Heart-check Questions

1.) Do you see the pride in your life? When is it hardest for you to be humble?
2.) Are you willing to change your prideful ways and attitudes and be humble toward God and others? Be specific about what ways and to whom.

### Practical Applications

Isaiah 66:2b

God is fired-up about the humble person, and the humble person totally respects what the Bible says. Humility is not being phony by not expressing your opinions, but humility is considering others before yourself and having the loving, selfless attitude of Christ even when you express your own opinions.

To be humble when you sin:

a.) accept full responsibility
b.) make no excuses
c.) do not be defensive
d.) apologize humbly, and rejoice in being pleasing to God and like Jesus

When others sin against you:

a.) tell them in a respectful way (don't give in to fear or intimidation)
b.) focus on your love for them and not on what they have done to you
c.) forgive them and forget about it, moving on to being even better friends

Write out a one-page description of how you have seen your pride and how you can turn it into a humility that will make you ready to study the Bible to become a Christian.

## 3
# Grace

*To the leader of the study:*

The understanding of grace is the foundation for a love-motivated relationship with God, rather than one that is works motivated. Often teens raised in the church can be little Pharisees in the making, knowing the requirements of the Christian life, but missing the heart motivation. Similarly, overachievers (in the world or in the kingdom) are valued by others and value themselves based on their performance. The goal of this study is to build security, self-esteem and worth based on God's forgiving love and not on the teen's Christian duty or perfect performance.

Your personal examples and analogies will make the difference in their understanding of a potentially broad and complex concept.

### Introduction

*Ask:*

1.) What is grace?

Some answers:

a.) undeserved forgiveness
b.) an "in-spite-of" kind of love
c.) acceptance even without perfect performance
d.) real love

*(Give some examples and analogies from your own life.)*

2.) Where does grace come from?

a.) a Christian receives the substitution of Jesus' righteousness for their sinfulness (2 Corinthians 5:21)
b.) after baptism, the blood of Jesus covers over my sins, allowing me to be justified: "just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned" (1 John 1:7)

| INPUT = OUR PART | GRACE | OUTPUT=GOD'S VIEW |
|---|---|---|
| sin | | forgiveness |
| imperfection | | perfection |
| filthy heart | | a sinless heart |

- *Bottom line:* Grace is almost too good to be true, but it is! The goal of this study is to help you to see the real God who loves you and how valuable you are to him. He valued you at the cost of his only Son, whom he gave up so that there could be grace to forgive your sins and restore your relationship with him.

## The Scriptures

Psalm 103:8-10

What are some sins in your life?
What do you deserve for them?

a.) punishment (grounding, removal of privileges, jail, etc.)
b.) not being trusted by people

- *Bottom line:* God sees everything that we do and think, and he knows what we deserve. Yet, it is his grace that gives us forgiveness rather than punishment.

Romans 8:1-2

What does "no condemnation" mean?

a.) no punishment
b.) not feeling "in the doghouse"
c.) not feeling like God and others are looking down on you

- *Bottom line:* We can never earn grace. Grace comes through Jesus' sacrifice for our sins and frees us from the condemnation that we deserve because of our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:9-11

What is Paul because of grace?

a.) a forgiven man
b.) a Christian

What effect did God's grace have on Paul?

a.) He worked hard for God.
b.) He lived his whole life for Christ (Philippians 1:21).
c.) He was a very grateful man.

- *Bottom line:* Grace completely changes our lives.

## Personal Heart-Check Questions

1.) What should God's grace produce in you? Does it?
2.) How should you respond to God's grace? Will you?

## Practical Applications

Decide that you will live for God *because* of his grace and not to *earn* his grace.

Write a one-page letter to God expressing your understanding of his grace (using a personal example from your life) and your gratitude for his grace.

# 4
# Purity

*To the leader of the study:*

Our society exalts sexual immorality, and it's raging out of control. Teenagers have hormones that are newly active, and they can let them rage out of control. However, God has made it clear that he wants us all to let the natural sexual desires remain dormant until they can be expressed within the marriage relationship.

In the Bible the term "purity" is most often referring to sexual purity, but it also is used to refer to being free from contamination by worldliness in general. Contaminated water is undrinkable, just as a contaminated heart is unacceptable to God. The purpose of this study is to help teenagers to understand and embrace God's convictions about purity.

Share some of your challenges with purity when you were a teen.

## Introduction

1.) Have you, or has anyone you know, had food poisoning? Do you know what happens? Since the food is contaminated and poisonous, the body does everything possible to flush the poison out! It's really gross, but if the poison is not removed, the person could die.

2.) What are some ways teenagers are impure in everyday life?

a.) lustful thoughts/fantasies and "the second look"
b.) watching movies or TV shows with sexually explicit scenes and themes
c.) reading pornographic magazines or visiting pornographic sites on the Internet
d.) listening to or telling dirty jokes
e.) flirting (desiring attention from the opposite sex and acting or speaking in such a way as to get it)
f.) sexual immorality
g.) masturbation

- The goal of this study is to help you to take hold of God's convictions about purity of heart and life. It will also help you see that following God's plan is always the most fulfilling in the long run. Being contaminated and poisoned by the world will *damage* your soul. God has a great plan for your life and is excited about watching it unfold for you in his time!

## The Scriptures

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

What are some things we need to do to stay pure?

a.) avoid sexual immorality
b.) control our own bodies

- *Bottom line:* God has high standards for us to be totally different from people in the world. We need to have the same expectations for ourselves as God does. He doesn't call us to anything that is not possible. When we are impure, we hurt God and ourselves and, if someone else is involved, them.

2 Timothy 2:22

What are "the evil desires of youth"?

*sensual pleasures like sex and drugs and reckless abandon*

Why do you think God says these evil desires have to do with youth?

a.) They are *new* experiences, so they appeal to curiosity.
b.) Teenage bodies are changing sexually.
c.) The "young, wild, free, indestructible" mentality can take hold of young people.

What does it mean to "flee" from something?
*to desperately run away, usually from something dangerous (a murderer, etc.)*

What does it mean to "pursue" something?
*to go after it with all your heart*

- *Bottom line:* We have the right to choose where we spend our energy in life—whether on worldly goals or on spiritual ones. God calls us to run away from what our human nature screams for us to go after: destructive, worldly desires, activities and thoughts. We must instead go after the challenge of being godly in a godless world.

Ephesians 5:3-5

How much is a hint?
What does God say to replace impurity with?
What does it mean to have no inheritance?

- *Bottom line:* God takes purity very seriously!

### Personal Heart-Check Questions

1.) How are you different from your friends in the world?
2.) Are you willing to change your life, thoughts, and habits to be radically pure all the time?

### Practical Applications

Read Psalm 119:9. Remember that when you are tempted, the Word will help you to resist sin. Memorize scriptures about purity/impurty to have ready for when you are tempted with this sin.

Read James 5:16. Confess your sin to someone who can help you. Remember that God loves you and forgives you! Next time, ask advice about movies, times with boys and girls together, dates, etc.

Write out a one-page essay about what you have learned from this study and how you were convicted. Write down how you are personally going to change and some things you will do differently from now on.

## 5
# Respect

*To the leader of the study:*

In today's society, respect is in a sad state of affairs. We see a lack of respect in the classroom, in athletics and against those given authority by the government. But that's the world and it's different for those who love God. There must be an uncompromising, relentless expectation of young teenagers to respect those they are called to respect. Every aspect of disrespect must be challenged in their lives from this study. I do believe deep in their hearts they do want to respect others. Help draw it out of them.

### Introduction

*Ask:*

1.) What does respect mean?

*Some answers:*

a.) look up to
b.) admire
c.) listen to

*The answer:* To feel or show honor or esteem for; hold in high regard.

- The goal of this study is to help you see how important respect is to God and to teach you who needs to be respected.

## The Scriptures

Mark 12:28-30

Best place to start is respect for God.

How do you show respect for God?

By loving God with all you've got.

How do you love God with all your heart and soul (emotions)? Mind and strength (actions)?

a.) share your heart with him in prayer

b.) do all God asks of you

c.) serving God (i.e. by being a servant to others)

d.) finding out, by studying, how to be with God in heaven

e.) constantly think about God and what Jesus would do in every situation

- *Bottom line:* You show respect for God by honoring him by who you are, what you say and how you live. Your respect for God will directly cause you to respect others, as he commands.

Ephesians 6:1-3

Respect your parent(s).

How should you honor and show respect for your parents?

a.) obey them right away without complaining

b.) love them unconditionally

c.) listen attentively and look them in the eyes when they speak

d.) be open with them (share your heart with them)

e.) appreciate and value them for who they are and all they do for you

f.) have respectful body language

- *Bottom line:* Any disrespect for your parent(s) needs to change. The result of respect is that it brings joy to God and joy to your family.

1 Peter 2:17

Name others you absolutely need to respect

a.) sibling(s)

b.) coaches of athletic teams

c.) leaders in the church

d.) policemen and other government officials

e.) teachers in school

f.) people running clubs/activities you're part of

1 Thessalonians 5:12

Why should you respect spiritual leaders?

a.) They've been given a responsibility and you should make their responsibility a joy.

b.) It builds your spiritual character to respect others.

c.) God says so.

Romans 13:1-7

Respecting rules, regulations, laws and guidelines. Why wouldn't you follow these?

a.) To have an unfair advantage over someone

b.) Because you're rebellious

Why should you follow these?

a.) God expects you to.

b.) It builds your spiritual character.

c.) You contribute to order rather than participate in disorder. Name some rules, regulations, laws and guidelines you need to follow at home, at school and at other people's houses.

- *Bottom line:* The fact of life is that there are rules, regulations, laws and guidelines to fol-

low everywhere you go. God expects us to follow them as long as it doesn't contradict the Bible. You must repent of any disrespectful attitude in any of these areas.

- *Overall bottom line:* Romans 12:10. Respecting others and respecting rules will show how spiritually mature you are. Also, the more you respect people and rules, the more respect you will get back from others.

### Personal Heart-check Questions

1.) Would God say he feels like you respect him? Would your parents?
2.) To whom are you most tempted to be disrespectful? How will you repent?
3.) What rules, regulations, laws or guidelines are you most tempted not to follow? How will you repent?

### Practical Applications

Write out one page about what you've learned from this study and what you will do differently because of what you learned.

*Note to leader of study:* If a teen has an extreme problem with respect, he may have an extreme problem with respecting himself. Please do an appropriate follow-up study on that subject.

## 6

# Righteousness (No Matter What)

*To the leader of the study:*

Righteousness is one of the most unpursued qualities of Jesus. To be righteous is to be like Jesus. The goal of this study is to challenge and inspire the teens to seek righteousness with all their hearts.

You must be open about your life to facilitate openness in the teenager.

### Introduction

*Ask:*

1.) Describe "righteousness" in your own words.

*Some answers:*

a.) doing the right thing
b.) being obedient to God and parents
c.) obeying laws

2.) When is it most challenging to be righteous?

a.) when you feel peer pressure
b.) when things are hard
c.) when you just don't feel like obeying
d.) when you don't understand

- The goal of this study is to help you to biblically define righteousness and to help you see your need to be righteous in every situation no matter what.

### The Scriptures

1 John 3:7

Who is righteous?

a.) Those who do what is right.
b.)Those who are not led astray.
c.)Those who imitate Jesus.

James 2:21-22

What made Abraham righteous?

a.) He offered Isaac.
b.) He obeyed God.
c.) He obeyed with faith.

- *Bottom line:* To be righteous is to do what is right and to obey God's commands.

Matthew 26:38-39

How was Jesus feeling? overwhelmed, sad or sorrowful, "This is hard," "I do not want this" How did Jesus respond to his feelings?

a.) He was open about them in prayer.
b.) He was willing to do God's will.
c.) He made a decision to obey, no matter what.

- *Bottom Line:* We must do what is right even when we do not *feel like* obeying God.

Acts 5:28-29
Why were the apostles being persecuted?
a.) They filled the city with the words of Jesus.
b.) They made people feel guilty about hurting Jesus.
How did they handle the persecution?
a.) They were bold.
b.) They obeyed God no matter what.
c.) They did what was right or righteous.

- *Bottom line:* In the face of persecution or peer pressure, we must do what God says.

### Personal Heart-check Questions

1.) Is righteousness a daily goal in your life?
2.) What areas are you most tempted to be unrighteous?

### Practical Applications

Matthew 6:33
Start every morning by seeking God first.
a.) Pray to be righteous.
b.) Be open about areas of weakness.
c.) When unsure of what to do, ask, "What would Jesus do?"

Write out one page about what you've learned from this study about righteousness; some things you have done or will do differently because of this study; and how this will help you be a disciple someday.

7

## Training Yourself to Be Godly

*To the leader of the study:*

A teen embarking on studying the Bible must have the maturity to follow through with the life-changing decisions that they will make throughout the study series. One way that their maturity can be discerned is by their efforts to train themselves in godliness through their personal Bible study and their conduct around other teens. Look for signs that they are taking their spiritual progress into their own hands and not waiting for others to do all of the initiating.

The goal of this study is to help them to see their need to be self-motivated in their relationship with God and their pursuit of the studies. Hopefully they will come away with the confidence that they can mature in their character quickly.

### Introduction

Ask:
1) What is involved in training? (athletic, spiritual )
a.) repetition
b.) learning the basics
2) How will you train yourself to be godly?
a.) consistent, daily times with God in Bible study and prayer
b.) sharing your faith daily
c.) having self-control in challenging situations

- The goal of this study is to help you to see that your spiritual progress depends on your willingness and effort to build your relationship with God on the foundation that has been laid by others. God wants each of us to take personal

responsibility to mature and grow. To be godly requires self-discipline and seriousness in heart and mind.

## The Scriptures

Philippians 2: 2-13

Who is responsible for your salvation ?

*pick one:* parents, teen leader, church, or you

What does it mean to "work out your own salvation"?

a.) obedience to God, even when other spiritual people aren't around

b.) personal attention to your spiritual welfare

c.) fearing God

- *Bottom line:* God puts the responsibility to work out your salvation on you. Then when you start working, he works in you to help you live out his purpose.

1 Peter 2: 2-3

What does it mean to crave?

a.) to have an intense desire

b.) can't wait to get it

What is "pure spiritual milk"?

a.) the Bible and prayer

b.) godly advice from parents, teachers and leaders

c.) Christlike examples

- *Bottom line:* What we desire, we pursue. You must cultivate an appetite for a godly character by "tasting" the goodness of the Lord through your personal Bible study and imitating godly qualities in others.

1 Timothy 4:12

What example can you set for other teens?

a.) Bible study and prayer being daily and life-changing

b.) daily evangelism with faith

c.) homelife (Christianity starts in the home!)

d.) serving without hesitation

e.) speaking to others to build them up and not tear them down, whether it's a challenge or an encouragement; giving from your heart in all conversations

f.) acting maturely in church (not silly or immature)

g.) being real and sincere in your motivation to become a Christian

- *Bottom line:* Even though you are young, you can inspire others by your godly example.

## Personal Heart-Check Questions

1.) What areas do you see that you need to mature in?

2.) Are you willing to take responsibility for seeking to change in these areas?

## Practical Application

Keep a journal for your quiet times so that you can remind yourself of the things you are learning and growing in.

Decide that you will be an example to the other teens when you are in the fellowship.

Go over the studies we are doing so that you can be sure to put the things you are learning into practice.

Write a one-page essay describing the areas that you need to grow in and what you will initiate to see them change.

8

# What's Your Dad Like?

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Ask the teen to write out their view of God *before* you get together to study the Bible. When you sit down to study, ask them to give you their essay, and hold on to it until the end.

*To the leader of the study:*

A teenager's view of their dad will affect how they view God. In order to be in a healthy relationship with God, the teen must understand what God is like and begin to love him deeply.

*Special notes:* Even if the teen's dad is not with the family, he still has a presence and an impact on his child's life. Use the Introduction time to draw out how they feel about him, whether present or absent. Also, be sure to encourage teens who don't have a great example in a dad that God is the perfect Dad for them.

Open your time together by sharing about your own dad.

## Introduction

Think about your own dad. Pretend I've never met him or heard about him. Describe him to me.

*Some sample questions to help the teen:*

What does your dad love to do? Hate to do? What are some of his best character traits? Worst? How do you know how he feels about you? When is he most proud of you? What makes him mad?

## The Scriptures

Luke 15:11-24

What is the son like before he leaves?

a.) selfish—took his dad's money before he was even dead

b.) very sinful—reckless, wild, sensual

Even though the son was really mean to his father when he left, how did the father respond when the son returned?

a.) excited

b.) gave him gifts

c.) called people together to celebrate

- *Bottom line:* God is a compassionate and loving Father who desperately *wants* to be with us. He is not a judgmental God, waiting to zap us for every mistake. He is not an uncaring God, laughing at our pain. He wants to welcome each one of us home in our relationship with him.

John 8:1-9

What was Jesus' reaction to this woman's embarrassing, humiliating sin? (Keep in mind that Jesus' character is the exact representation of God's character.)

a.) sensitive to her embarrassment

b.) treated her sin like any other—not, "Oh, I can't believe you did *that*!"

c.) totally forgiving, even though that sin was punishable by death

- *Bottom line:* Forgiveness is part of God's character. Understanding our need for forgiveness and God's willingness to totally forgive us helps to draw us closer to him, to love and appreciate him more.

Hebrews 12:5-11

How does this passage say it feels to be disciplined?

a.) like hardship

b.) painful

c.) unpleasant

Why does God discipline?

a.) for our good (to keep us from walking on evil paths)

b.) so we can learn lessons in order to make better decisions in the future
c.) so we can be secure that he loves and cares for us

What is our Dad in heaven like?

a.) He unconditionally loves.
b.) He forgives *all* of our sins.
c.) He disciplines us for our good.
d.) He believes in us and wants us to live happily ever after.

Jeremiah 29:11

This passage sums up how God takes care of us when we seek him.

### Personal Heart-Check Questions

1.) Do you want to be closer to God?
2.) Let's read your essay now. Is your view of God different now than when you wrote this?
3.) Do you see any relationship between how you personally view your earthly father and how you view your heavenly Father?
4.) Are you willing to open wide your heart to God and let him be the Father to you that he wants and needs to be?

### Practical Application Questions

Write out a one-page essay about what you've learned from this study and why you think this is an important study to do in order to become a disciple or grow as a disciple.

Pray every day to see God as the Bible describes him, not as you feel or think he is.

## 9

# Who Are You Living to Please?

To the leader of the study:

People-pleasing is predominant among teens. As they develop a stronger sense of their own identity, they seek approval and acceptance from others. Christian-parented teens are commonly motivated by people-pleasing to study the Bible. They feel a great deal of pressure to study the Bible to please their Christian parent(s), siblings and friends. They can strive to give the "right" responses to questions—not necessarily their own true heartfelt responses.

### Introduction

*Ask:*

1.) Whose approval is important to you? Who do you want to please or get approval from?

*Some answers:*

a.) myself
b.) parents, teachers
c.) teen leaders and older disciples
d.) friends

2.) Why?

a.) to be accepted, liked, popular
b.) to feel good about myself
c.) because if feels good to be praised

- The goal of this study is to help you to see the importance of pleasing God and seeking praise and approval from Him.

### The Scriptures

John 5:41-44

What is Jesus teaching in this Scripture?

a.) We need to follow his example by focusing on getting praise from God, not people.

b.) We will please whom we love.

- *Bottom line:* These people knew the truth but did not follow it because of peer pressure. They cared more about their reputation with people than they cared about doing what was right before God.

Galatians 1:10

What does Paul tell us about the difference between pleasing people and pleasing God? *They are opposites!*

When are you tempted to do the God-pleasing thing but with people-pleasing motives?

a.) going to church

b.) obeying parents just because they said so, not because you want to please God

c.) serving, but wanting recognition for all you do by peers or leaders

- *Bottom line:* When we strive to please God, we may not be popular with the world, but keep in mind that man's approval is temporary, while God's approval is eternal!

Mark 12:14

What does it mean to be "swayed by men"?

Who are you most likely to be swayed by?

What does "integrity" mean?

a.) sticking to your convictions no matter what

b.) doing what you said you would do and doing it on time

- *Bottom line:* Jesus was not swayed by men because he saw them from a spiritual perspective. We need to imitate this quality in him.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Why should we care about trying to please God?

a.) It doesn't just happen—it has to be a set goal.

b.) We all (every single person, whether we believe in God or not) will be accountable for our lives.

c.) Jesus died for us, and we need to live to please him.

## Personal Heart-Check Questions

1.) Can you relate to the people-pleasing Pharisees in any way?

2.) Have you counted the cost of studying the Bible? Becoming a Christian will affect your reputation with your non-Christian friends.

3.) What do your life-style and your priorities say about how much faith you have in God?

## Practical Applications

Make three columns on a page. In the first column, list all the activities you are involved in—everything, including studying the Bible, school activities, free time, etc. In the next column, write the reason *you* think you participate in it. Ask others who know you well to tell you why *they* think you are involved. Allow them to point out the areas where they see you "loving praise from men rather than from God," and write their insights in the third column. Be honest and encourage honesty! Bring the list to your next study, and review it with your teen leader. This will help you to see whom you are living to please and decide to please God instead.

Write out a one-page essay about why you really want to study the Bible. Include whom you are trying to please by studying and why.

10

# Relationships with the Family

To the leader of the study:

Family relationships are second only to your relationship with God. It is an absolute must that a teen's heart for their family is in the right place. There needs to be a deep abiding love and respect for their parent(s) and a strong, inseparable love for each sibling. From this study there needs to be a distinct change in the teenager's relationship with members of their family.

*Note:* This is not a study about the parent(s) or sibling(s) weaknesses. Hear the teenager out if they feel the need to voice some of the weaknesses so you don't frustrate them. Then you, the teen leader, go back and respectfully talk those issues out with his parent(s). Strongly emphasize to the teenager that this study will focus specifically on what he or she needs to change.

## Introduction

*Ask:*

1.) What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses in your relationships with your family?

*Some answers:*

| *Strengths* | *Weaknesses* |
|---|---|
| a.) cheerful | a.) irresponsible |
| b.) loving | b.) disrespectful |
| c.) affectionate | c.) independent |

Proverbs 23:22-26

2.) What do you think will bring the greatest joy to your parent(s)?

a.) listening to them
b.) living by the truth
c.) changing how you live at home

- The goal of this study is for you to change your dynamics in your relationship with your family. The results will bring greater joy to your family.

## The Scriptures

John 19:25-27

As Jesus was dying on the cross, what are some words you would use to describe how he looked after his family?

a.) compassion
b.) love
c.) care

- *Bottom line:* If Jesus shows that kind of care for his family, especially making sure his mother was taken care of, while dying on a cross, we need to daily care about our own families by being righteous and loving toward them.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Whom should you respect?

a.) those who work hard
b.) those over you in the Lord
*(Your parents fit into these categories!)*

How can you show greater respect for your parent(s)?

a.) listen right away
b.) obey right away
c.) verbally express to them that you love and respect them frequently or write it to them in cards or letters.

- *Bottom line:* You've been given so much by your parents. You need to give back by always showing the respect they deserve and God expects you to have for them.

Ephesians 4:29-5:1

How do you get along with each sibling? (Go through each one.)

In your relationship with your sibling(s), what should you get rid of?

a.) bitterness
b.) rage
c.) anger
d.) any bad feelings

How should you treat your sibling(s)?

a.) with encouragement
b.) with kindness
c.) with compassion

- *Bottom line:* In God's eyes, there is no such thing as sibling rivalry. You must treat all your physical brothers and sisters with so much love that this love is only surpassed by your love for God and your parent(s).

## Personal Heart-check Questions

- What needs to change the most in your relationship with your family?
- How will you go about changing these things starting today?

## Practical Applications

Apologize specifically to your sibling(s) about how you've fallen short and express to them how you want to be different.

Write a one-page letter to your parent(s) about how grateful you are for them, and how you will specifically change to show a greater respect for them (Ephesians 6:1-2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:13: obey, honor and hold them in the highest regard).

# Using *She Shall Be Called Woman* in an Outreach Study

**Sheila Jones**

*She Shall Be Called Woman: Old Testament* or *New Testament* is an excellent book to use for group study—with a midweek class, a discipleship group or an outreach group. This section will deal with using the material in an outreach group setting. Everyone is aware of the surge of interest in book clubs, in women's studies and in becoming more aware of the spiritual aspect of life. Studying this book meets all these needs while introducing women to the kingdom and to Jesus.

For several months I led a group of working women (called "9 to 5 and Spiritually Alive"). We met every other week, and had "meal teams" of three or four women who did the meal once every four meetings. We preferred that approach instead of every woman bringing food every time. We also had childcare teams to rotate the responsibility for the children.

Each week we studied one of the women in the book. The participants came to the group knowing whom we would be discussing that evening. Whoever led the group would take an approach especially tailored to nondisciples. Therefore, the outline and questions were evangelistically oriented. We did not just go with the points made in the chapter; we took it further and applied them personally.

The keys to the effectiveness of that group were the openness and vulnerability of the people in the group and the fun that we had. Working women are tired and hungry at the end of the day. They need to be able to unwind, so the atmosphere should not be at all stiff or formal. Two women became Christians from the group, with several other women studying to the point of making a decision against becoming disciples.

Here are three sample studies from the Old Testament book:

## TAMAR

*Introduction:* In this life, there are many kinds of hurt.

- Name as many types as come to mind.
- Which type has been the most painful for you?
- What are some of the different ways in which people respond when they are hurt?

Tonight we are going to read about a young girl who was hurt. She suffered the deep hurt of sexual abuse. For some of us this will hit home; we identify with Tamar and with the hurt she felt. This is a sensitive issue, but one that needs to be dealt with head on with honesty and with biblical understanding. (Read 2 Samuel 13.)

### 1. Trust brings vulnerability.

- Why is this true?
- How was it true with Tamar?
- How did what happened seem to affect her relationships with others in her family?
- What are some ways that hurt of any type affects relationships? (Encourage the Christians to be really open about their lives here.)
- When our hurt is specifically from sexual abuse, how does that affect different relationships?
  - men in general?
  - boyfriend?
  - husband?
  - other women?
  - children?

### 2. Deceit easily takes root in the heart and migrates to every relationship.

- In what ways might we become deceitful if we are sexually abused?

- In what ways might we become deceitful if we are hurt in other ways?
  husband cheating on us?
  parents always criticizing us?
  friends betraying a trust?

### 3. It is not the abuses, disappointments and sorrows that harden our hearts; it is our responses to them.

- Do you agree that this is true?
- Why or why not?
- Why might we tend to think that we are punishing the person who hurt us by not forgiving them?
- Who are we really punishing?
- Tamar became a "desolate" woman. What does this mean? Did it have to be that way?

### 4. Training our thoughts to be spiritual takes decision and discipline.

(Read 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.)

- What kinds of thoughts have come to you as a result of having been hurt? (Most are probably negative in some way.)
- What are some of the things that Tamar probably thought?
- What does it mean to "take captive every thought"?
- To whom should those thoughts be obedient?
- How do we know whether they are obedient or not? (We need to know the Word.)
- Why might Tamar have felt justified to think any way she wanted to?

### 5. The only way not to be overcome by evil is to forgive the one who hurt you and the people who did not protect you (especially if you were a child when you were hurt).

(Read Matthew 6:14-15.)

- Who could Tamar have blamed other than Amnon? (Jonadab (son of Shimeah), if she knew of his closeness to Amnon and his shrewdness, and David)
- Why might she particularly have been angry with David? He was naive for not realizing what Amnon really wanted. He was furious when he heard what happened, but the scripture doesn't say he did anything about Amnon's sin.
- Why did blaming someone not really give her peace?
- Why do you need God in order to forgive someone who has hurt you?
- Once you come to know God, what is your motivation for forgiving others?

*Conclusion:* This true story shows us just how relevant the Bible is to our lives. Even though it was written thousands of years ago, it speaks to our hurt and grief, and to our need to forgive others. Tamar could live next door to you. Or Tamar could be you. In fact, in a very real way, she is all of us.

No matter what has happened to each of us in our lives, we all need God. Though we have all been sinned against, we have also all sinned against others. We need a relationship with God and we need forgiveness of our own sins. Then he will help us to forgive others for the ways they have sinned against us.

# LOT'S WIFE

*Introduction:* What can happen to someone who is looking back as they are trying to go forward? (Have people offer possible disastrous/humorous results.) It can be a really dangerous thing to do. Tonight we are going to talk about a woman who is famous for one thing: looking back! We know her simply as Lot's wife. Though we do not know her name, we can learn much from her.

(Explain who Abraham and Lot are. Don't assume anything with people who may never have even read the Bible. Read Genesis 13.) Lot made the choice of the plain of Jordan and "pitched his tents near Sodom," a very wicked place (vs. 11-14).

(Tell the story of Genesis 18—Abraham pleading for the people of Sodom.) Not even ten righteous people could be found (18:32-33). There were no people with any moral sense left in the town.

(Read Genesis 19:12-29.) They were told to flee and not to look back (v. 17). Lot's wife did not obey.

- Why might she have looked back?
- Why would any reason for looking back be inexcusable?
- What do you think God was saying symbolically by asking them not to look back?

## 1. The effect of culture on us

- What is the basic message in our world about morals? Standards?
- How does it affect us?
- What difference does it make when you have a standard of right and wrong that doesn't change?
- How have you personally experienced the Bible as that standard? What is the effect on your life?
- Why might Lot and his family not have wanted to leave?
- Have you ever hesitated to leave a part of your life that the Bible says is wrong? Why? What was the result when you did? What did the people around you say?

## 2. God wants to give us a better life, a life of forgiveness and joy

- How should that have caused Lot and his wife to feel?
- How does the fact that God wants you to have such a life cause you to feel?
- If they had not obeyed God by leaving, what would have been the result?
- Why would they have been willing to trade what God wanted for them for what they wanted for themselves?
- The message of God is always: *I love you. I want you to be with me. But you must reach out and take my hand and obey me.* What kind of attitude should we then have toward the Bible?

## 3. God wants us to make a decision and not to look back at our old life

(Read Luke 9:26.)

- What happens when a person who is plowing a field looks back instead of looking ahead?
- What is the spiritual point that Jesus is making?
- In what ways might a person who decides to obey God "look back"?

(Read Luke 9:62.)

- With what kind of attitude should we approach our relationships with God?
- How does the decision to obey God affect the way we treat people? Make decisions? Respond to our jobs?

*Conclusion:* I really believe that the reason we are told about Lot and his wife is to learn to give total, loyal devotion to God. He is God, and therefore, he deserves our total commitment to him. Lot took the easy way in the beginning, and the easy way hurt him and his family.

God is reaching out for our hands, calling us to follow him, obey him—wherever we are—by taking a step closer to understanding what he is asking of us.

Be determined to go forward—toward God—and never to "look back."

## JEZEBEL

*Introduction:* What do people generally mean when they say about a woman, "She is a Jezebel"? Not quite a compliment, is it? Read the first paragraph of the chapter on Jezebel in *She Shall Be Called Woman:*

> Take the greedy heart of Miss Hannigan in *Annie*, the power hunger of Ursula in *The Little Mermaid*, the vile cruelty of Cruella in *101 Dalmatians*, the murdering jealousy of the wicked queen in *Snow White*, combine them with the sexual perversion of a porn queen, and you have a character sketch of Jezebel, wife of King Ahab. Jezebel, however, was no fictitious character. She was as real as we are.
>
> Without God at the center of our hearts, we too can become a Jezebel. She is femininity run amok.
>
> We might tend to think, "I'm nothing like Jezebel. She was so evil." But all of the women in the Bible are mentioned so that we can learn from them. We need to have hearts that are open to learning from Jezebel. Be open to seeing yourself in some way as we get a better understanding of her motives and her heart.

(Readings: 1 Kings 16:29-33, 18:16-19, 21:1-28)

### 1. Our influence on husbands/family/friends

- What does it mean to "influence" someone?
- In what ways did Jezebel influence Ahab? (Baal worshipper, priestess—1 Kings 16:31, said she could get vineyard for him—21:7, evil, urged on by Jezebel—21:25)
- How can you influence your husbands/friends for bad? For good? To be idolatrous?
- How can you most help them to be concerned about spiritual things? (See 1 Peter 3:1-6.)
- Consider Ahab and Jezebel's desire for the vineyard: When we want something (as Jezebel did), how might we manipulate in order to get it?
- Do you ever decide you want something, and then go after it without even considering if it is God's will?
- Do you ever advise someone to do something they want to do simply because they think it will make them happy? How should you really advise them?

## 2. Blind to God

- Jezebel tried to fill her life with what she thought would make her happy. What have you tried to fill the void in life with (the God-shaped vacuum)?
- Did it satisfy? Why or why not?
- Jezebel hid behind her walls and ignored the ways God was revealing himself to her. What were some of those ways? (his authority by stopping the rainfall, his power by responding to the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, his righteous judgment by killing the prophets of Baal, his mercy by restoring the rains, his patience by allowing her time to repent)
- Why do we put up walls between God and us?
- What are we protecting?
- What have we failed to realize when we put up these walls?

## 3. Pride

- What might have motivated Jezebel to "Paint her eyes, arrange her hair and look out of a window"? (Certainly she was empty. Youth had faded, power had been taken...what was left?.. Also, she had trusted in outward things for so long, that as the end neared for her, she was concerned about her appearance.)
- What about us? What are we tempted to trust in to get our confidence and our joy?
- How much do we trust in ourselves, our image, our abilities?
- What is a working definition of humanism? (people have all the answers within themselves)
- When we feel all the answers are within us, why is it hard to be vulnerable?
- Why do we need to be vulnerable?

*Conclusion:* (Read Matthew 18:2-4.) This description of a truly humble person is the antithesis of Jezebel. Heart check: Do we relate to the person described in this passage, or to Jezebel?

*Decide:* Nothing will keep me from seeking God and having a great relationship with him...and from influencing others to do the same.

# PART 2



# Practical Training

# Dynamic Bible Talks

## I. How do you get people to come to the Bible study?

A. You've got to really want it—we work at the things we really want.

B. You can't work for the Bible study a little bit. It must be all the time. Have an evangelistic life-style, taking every opportunity to invite and follow up with open people.

C. Don't prejudge people before you give them an opportunity.

D. Make a list of all possible contacts before you start out.

E. Don't necessarily ask the same people every week (depending on their responses).

F. Spend time with the people that you want to invite.

G. Invite them and get commitments if possible ("maybe's" don't usually come).

H. Be direct: "Do you want to come?" Example: If you asked someone out for a date and only got a maybe answer, how would you feel? Friendship: "It would mean a lot to me."

I. Keep in contact with people who have committed to come. On the day of the Bible study, don't say "Are you still coming?" (that gives them a way out). Say, "I'm looking forward to your coming tonight."

J. Decide to overcome fear and shyness by asking *many* to the Bible study. (For every 10 invited, probably only one will come.)

K. If you aren't enthusiastic and positive, you won't get good results. (Don't be ashamed of something so good!)

L. Keep a small notebook listing the people you are asking so that you can keep up with all of them.

M. It comes down to *hard work* (1 Corinthians 15:10).

N. Plan to bring your guests with you — pick them up/walk with them to the Bible study.

O. If you were to invite yourself to the Bible study, would you come?

## II. What kind of atmosphere should there be before Bible study begins?

A. It should *not* be:
1. Quiet and tense
2. Unfriendly

B. It should be:
1. Friendly
2. Warm

C. How to set the atmosphere:
1. Be on time—a few minutes early.
2. Introduce your new friends to others.
3. Introduce yourself to people you don't know.
4. Keep the conversations going until the leader says it's time to begin.
5. Have light music and refreshments.

## III. What do the Christians do during the Bible study?

A. They need to affirm the Bible study message from their personal lives—visitors can relate to the Bible having such practical applications. Let the visitors know how you have changed.

B. Comments should be on the topic and supportive.

C. You should not try to lead the direction of the discussion (don't get off on tangents). Don't bring up other passages of scripture unless you are specifically asked. Don't try to "preach."

D. Be alert—think at all times.

E. You're not there just to learn, but to accentuate the message.
F. Do not condemn your old denomination or denominations as a whole.
G. Do not "aim" your comments at your visitors.
H. Do not say anything that is "off the wall"—the first thing that comes into your mind.
I. Do not make comments that are too long.
J. Speak up when you talk; speak clearly.
K. If you don't know what you're talking about, it's better to let someone speak who does know.
L. This is not a time for Christians to ask questions.

## IV. How important is unity? (team spirit) How can unity be developed?

A. Unity is *very* important. Unless everyone works together, the study will not be very effective.
B. Make a special effort to develop relationships with the other people involved in the study. Do things together—eat, pray, play.
C. The Christians in the Bible study need to expect the best out of each other—they ought to expect hard work from each other, like any team.
D. The Christians should pray for one another daily.
E. The Christians should also should pray daily for the non-Christians who have been coming.
F. Members need to communicate with each other about who they are sharing with (as encouragement) and communicate to the leader, so that the leader can be acquainted with the needs of the non-Christians in planning the Bible study.

## V. What do you do when the Bible study is over?

A. Plan to stay for a few minutes and talk with the visitors. Have good conversations.
B. Don't get into arguments. Set up an appointment if necessary. (If they're argumentative, it's because they're convicted. Let them live with it for a night!)
C. Be sensitive to your visitors and get them home so that they will want to come back.
D. It's a good idea to have refreshments after Bible study—people can stay around and get to know each other.

## VI. How do you follow up?

A. If you receive a positive response, explain the study series and set up a study.
B. Share your life and how the studies helped you.
C. Involve people in your Bible study, as well as others who have similar interests or life situations.
D. Be sensitive to how they are feeling.
E. Plan fun activities together, as well as Bible studies.
F. Invite them back to Bible study and church.

*Roy Larson*
*Boston, USA*

# Dynamic Discipling Relationships

## I. Building blocks to great relationships:

A. Love is the foundation of every great relationship.

B. God has put people in our lives to love as Christ loves us (John 13:34-35).

C. Ask yourself: Do I really love the people God has put in my life?

D. This is the starting point to clarify before we discuss building blocks.

## II. Strive to develop a friendship (John 15:14-15).

A. Great discipling relationships are built on the foundation of love and flourish in friendship.

B. Friendship does not happen by accident.

1. It takes focus.
2. You must make it your first priority to be best friends with the people you disciple and with the person who disciples you.

C. Be a servant (Matthew 20:20-28).

1. Serving is the best way to communicate love to your friends.
2. Think about their needs and how you can serve to meet those needs.
3. Servanthood is the acid test of sincerity in any relationship.

## III. Share your life (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

A. This is what true friendship is all about.

B. Open up your heart, and share what's really going on.

C. Truthfulness is essential.

D. If people around you don't really know you, there's no relationship.

E. Be brutally honest with what's going on in your mind and heart.

F. Spend as much time together as you can.

G. Great relationships are built on vulnerability and time spent together.

## IV. Use the word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

A. Make sure to study God's word during your time together.

B. Remember that faith, hope and encouragement all come from God's word.

C. Watch out for the temptation that says not to look at a scripture that is already familiar.

D. Remember the words of the apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1:12-13.

## V. Be specific. Jesus did not disciple in generalities.

A. We must be specific in our questions and in our solutions.

B. Vague generalities do not help anyone to mature.

C. Don't be enslaved to the routine. Variety is the spice of life in discipling relationships.

D. Be creative in the things you do during discipling times.

E. Think about how fun it must have been to have been discipled by Jesus.

## VI. Be a loyal friend (Proverbs 17:17)

A. You need to be a friend that loves people.

B. Communicate your commitment to stick with them no matter what.

C. People need loyalty the most when they deserve it the least.

D. Love must be unconditional.

E. Make a commitment to love people through anything. Loyalty must go deeper than words.

## VII. Let's get specific:

A. We need to share with each other how specific areas of our lives are going.

B. Let's open up and share with one other in the following areas:

1. Bible study
2. If they are going through the new Christians' follow-up studies, discuss those topics.
3. Discuss how their quiet times are going (i.e., any problems, questions, what they are learning).
4. Share from your own quiet times.
5. Discuss Sunday's sermon and the midweek class.
6. Note: If they have responded to the Sunday sermon, follow-up!
7. Pray.
8. Make sure, first of all, that you do it.
9. Teach them how to pray (Matthew 6:9-15).
10. Discuss and teach concerning any misconceptions they may have about prayer.

C. We should discuss some areas of our walk with God:
1. Are they still walking by faith in their growth?
2. Is there a sensitivity to conviction?
3. Is there peace in their lives?
4. Is there a spirit of thankfulness?
5. Is their motivation still by grace?
6. Are they growing in boldness?
7. Are there any hints of having a complaining spirit?
8. Do you see areas in which they have quit giving their best?
9. Make sure they are being solution-oriented in their discipling of others.
10. How is their evangelism going? Discuss:
    a) Make sure you know about this area.
    b) Are there any problems/discouragements?
    c) What specific people are they studying with?
    d) Address the comments they made as the two of you studied the Scriptures with a non-Christian.
    e) *Note:* Make sure you are involved in evangelism together; don't just talk about it— do it together.

## VIII. Address life-dominating sin.

A. Frequently address specific sins that, by the individual's own admission, have dominated their lives.

B. Remember these three points:
1. Don't be naive as the discipler—Satan will come back to tempt them again (Luke 4:13).
2. Don't let them become overconfident (1 Corinthians 10:12).
3. Keep stressing the putting off/putting on principle (Ephesians 4:20-5:3ff).

## IX. Family Discipling

A. Discuss marriage often:
1. This relationship, more than any other human relationship, will affect them.
2. Some examples of areas to discuss are:
    a) The husband's role (Ephesians 5:25-33, 1 Peter 3:7)
    b) The wife's role (Ephesians 5:22-24, 1 Peter 3:1-6)
    c) Bring up any areas that you see they need help in as you have spent time together.
    d) Their finances
3. *Note:* Avoid gossip about an individual's spouse by making sure that you talk only about the areas that pertain to the individual you are discipling.

B. Discuss children often:

1. Children are the individuals we can have the most profound impact on for the kingdom of God.
2. Some areas to discuss:
   a) Any areas of concern about their children
   b) The whole area of discipline (Study/review Proverbs on discipline.)
   c) Any struggles/questions with the husband's/wife's role in raising the children.

## X. Dating Discipling

A. Discuss purity level (Ephesians 5:3-4)

B. Not running ahead of where the relationship realistically should be

C. Character changes that need to happen

D. Probe; get specifics. Don't assume anything.

## XI. Points to remember in perfecting other Christians:

A. In order for the discipling process to continue, the people you are discipling need to be faithful in their discipling of others. This is so vital.

B. Some areas to discuss:
   a) Are they covering the areas in this handout?
   b) Are there any problems they don't know how to handle?
   c) Are they being perceptive in their evaluations of problems and people?

## XII. Follow-up:

Make sure you follow up in any areas you discussed from the last time you were together—either during your scheduled times together or any impromptu times throughout the week.

*Roy Larson*
*Boston, USA*

# Spiritual Growth Patterns

- What do disciples *need* at different stages of their spiritual life?
- What *character trait* should the disciple be exhibiting (and the discipler be expecting) at that level?
- What do disciples *require* from their discipler at that time?

## I. Spiritual Infants (0-6 months)

(everyone is different; ages are approximate)

A. *Need:* Security
1. They need to be loved.
2. They need a lot of time with discipler. Like a newborn baby from hospital, they need constant care.
3. Follow-up studies

B. *Character Trait:* Trust
1. Trust has been built up through studying the Bible together.
2. If not, work on the relationship more.

C. *Require:* Attention
1. You need to have daily contact with them—and the whole ministry group, too!
2. Be extremely patient and gentle; don't overreact, just teach and share.
3. Correct and challenge them, but don't rebuke strongly (some exceptions).

## II. Spiritual Children (6 mos. - 1 1/2 years)

A. *Need:* Training
1. They must learn to feed and motivate themselves in personal quiet times.
2. Train their evangelism, their marriage, their parenting and job habits; disciple every area of their lives. Disciple the heart!

B. *Character Trait:* Dependence
1. They should be calling their discipler for lots of advice.
2. This is usually the "zeal w/o knowledge" stage that gives rise to unnecessary persecution.

C. *Required:* Discipline
1. This is the "terrible two's"!
2. Discipline them a lot at this stage! They know what's right and are simply testing it out at this point. Be consistent in discipline, like with kids.

## III. Spiritual Adolescent (1 1/2 - 3 years)

A. *Need:* Identity
1. A spiritual teenager needs to discover their individuality.
2. Worldwide kingdom news is important because it has sunk in that this is where they will be for the rest of their lives. They want to know where they fit in the big picture.
3. Vision is important here; they need a plan for their lives.

B. *Character Trait:* Consistency
1. There is absolutely no excuse at this point for inconsistent quiet times, evangelism or emotions (i.e. mood swings).
2. A spiritual teen needs to be really working on their character.

C. *Required:* Flexible Direction
1. Give general direction and allow them to give a lot of input.
2. Most should be leading a Bible Talk by now.

## IV. Spiritual Young Adult (3 - 5 years)

A. *Need:* Independence

1. You are more equals now, more mutual friends, in discipling.
2. Don't ever stop challenging and correcting, but do it with more respect the older spiritually and physically a person is. The main thing is to always ask questions that bring out what's really going on inside and then disciple the heart!

B. *Character Trait:* Responsibility - can count on them to get assignments done

C. *Required:* Goals

1. Give them more goals than specific directions.
2. Let them have the freedom to get it done their way, as long as it gets done.

## V. Spiritual Adults (5 - 15 years)

A. *Need:* Sharing

1. They need to be able to share their own ideas and feelings about the ministry.
2. It is good to ask this group for input on how we can do things better in the sector, region, etc.

B. *Character Trait:* Maturity

1. They basically know how to handle themselves in most situations.
2. They are supportive of their leaders at every opportunity, including during reorganization and change. Generally they are very helpful.
3. They should be the faithful, trusting and reassuring leaven for the group.
4. They should challenge others in the group without being told to do so.
5. They should be eager to extend hospitality to visitors, new disciples or disciples who have moved into the area.

C. *Required:* Opportunities - They need to be able to use their God-given gifts for the advancement and edification of the church like leading a Bible Talk, a zone, a ministry, or serving as a shepherd, or leading in the Kids' Kingdom, etc.

## VI. Spiritual Elders (15 years and up)

A. *Need:* Respect

They need respect from everyone, including their discipler. Leaders are wise to lift them up frequently before church.

B. *Character Trait:* Wisdom

1. They have deep insights into people, situations, the ministry, God and the Bible.
2. They have done several things right to make it this long.

C. *Required:* A Forum - They need some well-defined forum for their leadership, taking a number of different forms, like full-time ministry, shepherding, Kids' Kingdom, music ministry, financial officer, etc.

*Jeff Chacon*
*Orlando, USA*

# A Biblical Guide to Help You Work Through Your Past

## I. Introduction

A. Q: What is the world's way of dealing with hurt, pain, injustice and abuse?

| | |
|---|---|
| -anger | -hold a grudge |
| -hatred | -pull heart away |
| -resentment | -run away |
| -bitterness | -ignore it and hope it goes away |
| -revenge | -justify all these behaviors |

1. The problem is that these "solutions" don't work. They are like putting a Band-Aid on a major wound. Instead of helping, they only make the problem worse because the heart is allowed to harden over a long period of time.
2. Jesus is the only one who can heal us of our hurt and pain. He stands ready to do it (see the account of the "bleeding woman" in Mark 5:25-34 for reference), but we must do it his way.

## I. God's way is that you face the truth.

A. John 8:31-32

1. Only the truth will set you free.
2. Many of us grew up in dysfunctional families where "touchy subjects" were not openly discussed.
3. Must be willing to face the truth, no matter how painful, in order to be healed.

B. Action

1. On a piece of paper, write: *What _____ did to hurt me:*
2. Then list things—the facts, not the feelings yet.
   a) Example (Ex): *My father hit me several times as a child.*
   b) Ex: *My brother sexually abused me at least 10 different times from the ages of 10-15.*
   c) Ex: *My mother belittled me and abused me verbally, saying things like: "You'll never amount to anything," etc.*

## II. You must feel the hurt.

A. On paper describe how each fact made you feel.

1. Ex: *When my father hit me, I felt angry at him and wanted to hit him back, or even kill him at times.*
2. Ex: *When my brother abused me, I felt confused, dirty and guilty.*
3. Ex: *When my mother belittled me, I felt discouraged and depressed.*

B. Write down how you responded to each hurt, what you did.

1. Ex: *I resented my dad privately and* silently. We still aren't close.
2. Ex: *I hated men because of what my brother did to me.*
3. Ex: *I have become an over-achiever because of what my mom said to me. I am constantly trying to prove her wrong about me.*

## III. You must free your heart.

A. Recognize that God will judge the perpetrators, so you don't have to.

1. God is just, and he will judge all of us appropriately on Judgment Day. Therefore, no one is getting away with anything.

2. David took comfort in knowing that God would judge his enemies with justice, that he would be *vindicated* on Judgment Day, and so may we (Psalm 10, Psalm 17, Psalm 26, Psalm 31, and others).
3. In Romans 12:19 God says, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay."

B. Recognize that God will judge you for your attitude and actions toward them as well.
1. Take responsibility for your sinful responses, and repent!
2. Anger, resentment, bitterness and hatred are all sins, no matter what the cause, and must be repented of (read Ephesians 4:31-32, Colossians 3:8, 2 Timothy 3:3, 1 Peter 2:1).

C. *Action:* Write out your sins and a paragraph of apology to God.

D. *Action:* Forgive the perpetrators for the things listed earlier and for how they made you feel, as you want God to forgive you. (*Note:* In some cases it may not be best to talk to the person, but to simply forgive them in prayer. Get advice.)
1. Matthew 6:14-15: If you don't forgive them, God won't forgive you!
2. Matthew 5:44: Jesus commands us to love our enemies.
3. Matthew 18:21-35: You can forgive because God has forgiven you for so much.

E. *Action:* Surrender the hurt and pain to God emotionally—1 Peter 2:18-25 (esp. v. 23)—Jesus entrusted himself and his victimizers to God, who judges justly.

F. *Action:* You may want to seal up these papers and put them in a drawer, or throw them away, or burn them as a symbol of your letting go of the past once and for all.

G. *Action:* Get grateful, and establish a new relationship with the person if possible.

H. *Action:* List as many good memories and positive qualities about that person as possible. Focus from now on those things. Write a letter or call them, if appropriate, to share your gratitude for them.

I. Some good books to read:
1. *You're Someone Special* by Bruce Narramore
2. *Family Dysfunctions* by Dale and Anita Ryan
3. *A Tale of Three Kings* by Gene Edwards
4. *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts* by Jerry Bridges

## IV. Conclusion

A. You can be freed from the baggage of the past. There is hope!

B. The whole process described in this study can take just a day or two. (*Note:* It can be done even if perpetrator is deceased because it depends on you, not them.)

C. Harboring a lack of forgiveness toward some one is a sin against God. So, you must repent of this to be right with God.

I wrote the following poem after freeing my heart from the past in 1992:

### "WE NEVER PLAYED CATCH"

(4/25/92)

We never played catch
or tried to walk on a wall.
He didn't come to my games
when I used to play football.
All I wish was I knew him,
and that he knew me.
But now it's too late—
I'm almost 33.

No, not too late,
because... there really are three.
There's three Daddys now:
him, God and me!

To Ty, Ky and Ry
I'm the one they see.
The past is the present
and the future's up to me!

Cool! We'll play catch, we'll ride bikes,
and we'll talk all the time!
Ya, most of all...,
we'll spend a lot of time.

And we all have God.
There is justice you see,
because everyone can have
the perfect Daddy.

He's loving and loyal
and where he really shines
is he's really good
at just "spending time."
I forgive you, Dad,
as I hope they'll forgive me.
And I thank you, Father,
for giving me three.

*Jeff Chacon*
*Orlando, USA*

# Using the Psalms to Pray

To help you use the Psalms as outlines, guidelines and inspiration for prayer, all of the 150 Psalms are categorized below; there are no duplications.

## I. Kindling wood for the fires of prayer when it's tough to get started

A. When unmotivated (inspiring prayers)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 1 | Psalm 19 | Psalm 27 |
| Psalm 91 | Psalm 103 | Psalm 107 |

B. When feeling faithless (great reminders of the basis of our faith)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 48 | Psalm 74 | Psalm 77 |
| Psalm 78 | Psalm 81 | Psalm 105 |
| Psalm 106 | Psalm 111 | Psalm 119 |

## II. Learning how to worship, praise and give thanks to God

A. Adoration and praise, worship and thanks

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 8 | Psalm 9 | Psalm 24 |
| Psalm 29 | Psalm 45 | Psalm 47 |
| Psalm 87 | Psalm 92-93 | Psalm 95-96 |
| Psalm 98-99 | Psalm 100 | Psalm 104 |
| Psalm 113 | Psalm 117 | Psalm 133-135 |
| Psalm 136 | Psalms 146-150 | |

B. Special affection to God (some of the most intimate prayers)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 18 | Psalm 42 | Psalm 63 |
| Psalm 84 | Psalm 116 | Psalm 139 |
| Psalm 145 | | |

## III. Where to turn in the Psalms when feeling overwhelmed or discouraged

A. When overwhelmed (need to trust God)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 16 | Psalm 17 | Psalm 20 |
| Psalm 28 | Psalm 33 | Psalm 37 |
| Psalm 57 | Psalm 62 | Psalm 112 |
| Psalm 122 | Psalm 125 | Psalm 143 |

B. When afraid (need your fears calmed)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 23 | Psalm 34 | Psalm 46 |
| Psalm 55 | Psalm 56 | Psalm 118 |

C. When feeling guilty about sin and needing to get open and confess

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 32 | Psalm 38 | Psalm 43 |
| Psalm 88 | Psalm 130 | Psalm 141 |

D. When feeling disciplined by God

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 6 | Psalm 44 | Psalm 60 |
| Psalm 66 | Psalm 85 | Psalm 89 |
| Psalm 102 | Psalm 108 | Psalm 137 |

E. How to cry out to God for help

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 3 | Psalm 10 | Psalm 12 |
| Psalm 26 | Psalm 70 | Psalm 82 |
| Psalm 86 | Psalm 132 | Psalm 142 |

## IV. God, help me to overcome!

A. When fighting worldliness

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 11 | Psalm 49 | Psalm 52-53 |
| Psalm 58 | Psalm 73 | Psalm 101 |

B. When struggling with sin

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 4-5 | Psalm 7 | Psalm 13 |
| Psalm 25 | Psalm 31 | Psalm 39-41 |
| Psalm 65 | Psalm 79-80 | |

C. When dealing with persecution

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 2 | Psalm 22 | Psalm 54 |
| Psalm 59 | Psalm 64 | Psalm 69 |
| Psalm 83 | Psalm 94 | Psalm 109 |
| Psalm 120 | Psalm 129 | Psalm 140 |

D. How to humble yourself before God

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 14-15 | Psalm 36 | Psalm 50 |
| Psalm 51 | Psalm 71 | Psalm 75 |
| Psalm 76 | Psalm 90 | Psalm 97 |
| Psalm 114 | Psalm 128 | Psalm 131 |

## V. How to rely more on God for victory

A. God gives the victory!

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 21 | Psalm 30 | Psalm 35 |
| Psalm 67 | Psalm 126 | Psalm 127 |
| Psalm 144 | | |

B. God enables us to lead (when needing courage, confidence)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm 61 | Psalm 68 | Psalm 72 |
| Psalm 110 | Psalm 115 | Psalm 121 |
| Psalm 123 | Psalm 124 | Psalm 138 |

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# Discipling the Four Basic Temperaments

## I. Introduction

A. People are often divided into four basic "temperaments," although there is danger in categorization, and much that overlaps.

B. None of them are better or worse, only different; all have a valuable role in the Kingdom.

C. The goal is to be like Jesus: perfectly balanced in all areas.

1. Be thankful for your strengths, and excel in them, using them for the Kingdom.
2. Work on your weaknesses, and strive for balance in your character.

D. Proverbs 20:5

1. Respect and encourage others for their strengths.
2. Identify and challenge others in their weaknesses.
   a) This is the essence of discipleship! (Helping someone to grow into the image of Christ)
   b) Colossians 1:28-29

## II. Some practical guidelines on how to disciple different temperaments:

A. *Sanguine* (Peter)

1. Leadership style: An influencing individual who tends toward a persuasive style of leadership rather than an authoritative style
2. Major needs (wants):
   a) Popularity
   b) Freedom
3. Biggest fear: Loss of social approval
4. Discipleship strategy:
   a) Encourage:
      1) Reassure them constantly of God's love and yours.
      2) Build them up for their strengths, believe in and like them.
      3) Be sure to build them up again after disciplining them.
   b) Challenge:
      1) They need high accountability.
      2) Ask probing questions, as they tend to be secretive.
      3) Challenge their pride and independence regularly.
5. Jesus with Peter: John 1:41-42; Matthew 16:13-23; John 21:15-22

B. *Choleric* (Paul)

1. Leadership style: A dominant leader, forceful, authoritative, strong, opinionated—very focused and driven, direct, high ego, impatient, desires change, progress and success
2. Major needs (wants):
   a) A challenge (They love a stiff challenge.)
   b) Authority (Significance, having an impact)
3. Biggest fear: Being taken advantage of
4. Discipleship strategy:
   a) Encourage:
      1) Let them lead something. Give them an opportunity. Solicit their input.
      2) Inspire them by keeping the standard high and by being hard-line.
      3) Reassure them of their impact. They need your respect!
   b) Challenge:
      1) Overwhelm them with responsibility so they'll rely on God.

2) Help them to learn to meet the emotional needs of those they lead. Help them to get in touch with their own emotions regularly.
3) Challenge them to love and serve, and to not be domineering or lord it over the people that they lead.

5. God/Jesus with Paul: Acts 22:6-15; 2 Corinthians 1:8-11; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

C. *Phlegmatic* (Timothy)

1. Leadership style: Steady, stabilizing influence; very family oriented— Can be overly possessive, protective, but generally very loyal
2. Major needs (wants):
   a) Security
   b) Acceptance
3. Biggest fear: Loss of security or acceptance
4. Discipleship strategy:
   a) Encourage:
      1) Value their friendship (John, "the apostle Jesus loved," was probably phlegmatic.) They are the most natural friends.
      2) Reassure them of your friendship and loyalty to them.
      3) Instill confidence in them. You are God's anointed!
   b) Challenge:
      1) Teach them decisiveness, change! They tend to fear change in themselves and in their surroundings (discipling relationships, ministry, etc.).
      2) Teach them to be dynamic and powerful!
      3) Challenge laziness and complacency regularly!
5. Paul with Timothy: 1 Timothy 1:1-4; 2 Timothy 1:2-12; 4:1-5

D. *Melancholy* (Moses)

1. Leadership style: Idealist, creative motivator, deep thinker and teacher; generally a very talented, competent, perceptive and compliant person— They appreciate accuracy and attention to detail.
2. Major needs (wants):
   a) Appreciation
   b) Friendship
3. Biggest fear: Being wrong
4. Discipleship strategy:
   a) Encourage:
      1) Ask this person for their insights into things and share your own a lot. They enjoy and need deep conversation.
      2) Take the time to find out what they are into and gain an appreciation for their expertise in that field. Encourage them about their creations regularly.
      3) Teach them carefully and accurately (use the Bible a lot!). Be patient with their questions and don't take that as being critical; they just need to know the reasons for things. (In fact, they will lose trust in you if you give them wrong or contradictory information.)

b) Challenge:

1) Teach them that mistakes are okay. As perfectionists they need to hear about the grace of God, and your grace, over and over again.
2) Challenge them to be joyful always, as Philippians 4:4 commands.
3) Challenge them on their negative view of the world and their tendency to be down on themselves and others. This is very detrimental in discipling relationships, and they must learn to be positive, up on people, and not nitpicky in discipling relationships and marriage.

5. God with Moses: Exodus 3:1-21; 4:1-17

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# How Jesus Discipled Peter

## I. Jesus made friends with Peter, which encouraged Peter to be great.

A. Examples

1. Luke 5:1-3: Jesus initiated the friendship
2. Matthew 8:14-15: Jesus spent time at Peter's house; he did Peter a personal favor by healing his mother-in-law.
3. John 1:42: Jesus gave him a nickname, "Rocky."
4. John 2:1-2: They went to parties and wedding banquets together; several times Jesus allowed only Peter, James and John to go with him: the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8); the healing of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37-43); praying with him at Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-38); Jesus appeared to Peter first, before the rest of the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:3-5).
5. Matthew 17:24-27: They were *best friends!* (a great slice of life)

B. Results: Acts 4:8-13: Peter had loyalty, faith and courage, traits instilled by his Lord and friend, Jesus. (The true meaning of "encouragement" is "to instill courage in another.")

C. Make application

## II. Jesus believed in Peter, especially in his ability to lead.

A. Examples

1. Luke 5:4-11
   a) The large catch of fish was a vision of what Peter would do in the book of Acts: catch 3,000 in one day!
   b) Peter is so inspired by the vision of catching men that he leaves his boat and nets on the shore to follow Jesus.
2. Matthew 16:16-19: Sounds like a pep talk at halftime of the ball game: "I'm going to build my church on guys like you...and the gates of Hades will not overcome it! Peter, I'm giving *you* the keys. You're important. You're my quarterback!"
3. Matthew 19:27-28, 30: Jesus encourages Peter with the fact that he will have his own throne in heaven! (It's not wrong to want to be great—Romans 2:7.)
4. Luke 22:31-32: as if Jesus were saying, "Peter, I believe in you! You will get knocked down, but *when* you get back up, go lead your brothers."

B. Results

1. Peter *does* rise up to do great things *just* as Jesus said he would! Refer to:
   a) Acts 2: uses the keys to open the gates of the kingdom for the first time
   b) Acts 3: heals a crippled beggar and preaches powerfully
   c) Acts 4: stands before the Sanhedrin and boldly charges them with the murder of Jesus Christ!
   d) Acts 5: heals people and performs so many miracles that people are lining the streets "so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by" (v. 15)
   e) Acts 9: raises a woman from the dead (Tabitha)
   f) Acts 10-11: opens the gate of the kingdom to the Gentiles
   g) Acts 12: is busted out of prison by an angel

2. Galatians 2:9: Peter and James and John, Jesus' other top disciples, are known as the three "pillars" of the church!

C. Make application

## III. Jesus taught Peter to live from his heart.

A. Examples

1. Matthew 15:13-20: Peter needs to focus on the inside, not the outside!
2. Matthew 16:21-27: Jesus *dealt with the sin* in Peter's heart whenever he saw it—very important!
3. Matthew 18:21-35: Jesus teaches to forgive from the heart and to be merciful because God has been merciful to him (i.e. to have the right heart toward his brother).
4. Mark 11:25: Jesus teaches Peter about the need to check his heart in prayer.

B. Results

1. Acts 1:23-25: Peter is convicted that God looks at the heart.
2. Acts 5:3, 8:20-23: Peter can see and deal with sin in other people's hearts because he saw and dealt with the sin in his own heart.

C. Make application

## IV. Jesus challenged Peter's lack of faith

A. Examples

1. Matthew 14:28-31: Jesus says, "you of little faith" to Peter. Peter walked on water because Jesus had high expectations of him! (Ever feel like the expectations of this church for you are high? Good, we're being like Jesus!)
2. Matthew 26:36-46: Jesus expected Peter to stay awake and pray. Jesus was tired too, but the difference is that he relied on God. (High expectations force people to rely on God; low expectations allow them to rely on themselves. One key to the growth in LA is faith, produced by high expectations!)

B. Results: Acts 9:32-43 (note especially vv. 35, 42): Peter's faith is converting whole towns, thanks to Jesus' high expectations (Matthew 28:18-20).

C. Make application

## V. Jesus kept Peter focused on prayer and preaching.

A. Examples

1. Mark 3:13-16
2. Luke 21:37: Jesus teaching Peter by his own example.

B. Results: Acts 5:42-6:4: The apostles obviously got the message that Jesus was teaching.

C. Make application

*Jeff Chacon*
*Orlando, USA*

# How to Strengthen and Encourage

## I. Introduction

A. Acts 14:21-28

1. V. 26 states that Paul's first missionary journey was "completed."
2. Notice that Paul's efforts to establish the churches were not "completed" until he had gone back and
   a) strengthened and encouraged the disciples and
   b) raised up leaders to take care of all the new baby Christians

B. The point is that evangelism is not our only task. The "complete" task includes:

1. evangelism
2. discipleship (solidify our fruit)
3. raising up new leaders

## II. How did Paul "strengthen and encourage" the disciples?

Looking at the first chapter of some of Paul's letters gives us an idea as to how Paul approached the task. Paul set the tone in his greetings.

A. Romans 1:1-17 shows the secrets to a happy, healthy membership! Happy Christians are fruitful Christians, and fruitful Christians are faithful Christians.

1. Paul taught the Christians spiritual truths to strengthen them (v. 1-6).
2. Paul bonded his heart with theirs in a very personal way (v. 7-15).
3. Paul creatively reminded them of the gospel (v. 16-17).

B. 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

1. There is a reminder of the gospel in v. 2: "to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy."
2. There is a bonding of hearts in v. 4: "I always thank God for you..."
3. There is a teaching of spiritual truths for their strengthening in v. 5-9:
   a) In Christ, you have been enriched in every way.
   b) God, who is faithful, will keep you strong to the end.

C. 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

1. There is a bonding of hearts.
   a) Paul bonds his heart to the disciples by being vulnerable and sharing his weaknesses, and also by showing them how badly he himself needed God.
   b) The question is: Do you do that?
2. There is a teaching of spiritual truths.
   a) Paul teaches a precious truth: No matter how bad it gets, God is going to come through for you in the end!
   b) This is very upbuilding, strengthening, and encouraging!
3. *Application:* Do your midweek services imitate this pattern? If not, then repent, and lead with heart!
4. There was a preaching of the gospel. V. 2 is short, but not mere convention. Paul meant what he said.

D. Ephesians 1:1-23 (whole chapter)

1. Wouldn't you have loved to be in Paul's ministry?!
2. The whole tone is so positive, encouraging and faith-inspiring!
3. He was so loving, warm and personal!

E. Point out the same pattern in the following scriptures.

1. Philippians 1:3-11
2. Colossians 1:3-23

3. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10
4. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

## VI. How can leaders apply these lessons from Paul's letters?

A. In the tone of your midweek services
B. In your approach to discipling
C. In the way you think about the disciples (always believing in them and loving them as if they were your physical children)
D. Paul obviously went on to challenge their sin and to call them higher later on in his letters.
E. This is crucial to discipling, but that is not where to start nor the tone that should be used.
F. The tone should be positive and not negative.
G. When people know that you love them, your correction will be taken well.

"Above all, love each other deeply..." (1 Peter 4:8).

*Jeff Chacon*
*Orlando, USA*

# The Great Commission

(With guidance for using the *First Principles* studies)

## I. Introduction (Matthew 28:18-20)

Imagine how inspiring it must have been for the disciples to see the resurrected Savior. He called them to the mountaintop for one last time together. Imagine the flood of memories and emotions as he recapped his three-and-a-half years with them, then turned to them and said: "What I did with you, you must now go and do for the whole world.... Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

A. Nothing in our lives as disciples matters more than the Great Commission.

B. This is what it is all about:

1. We have so many great things in the church—DPI, HOPE, relationships, fellowship, great teaching, etc. But these are not our mission—they are our dividends. Our mission is to win souls. At the end of time all that will matter is whose name is written in the book of life.
2. When the history books are written, will we be remembered for our making of disciples? Who will go to heaven with us because of our efforts? Who will we have raised up to go and make disciples?
3. This is the mission of every disciple.

## II. Here are four keys to making disciples

A. Go and make friends.

1. Winning people's hearts is essential in making disciples.
2. Drawing people in is essential in winning them over and in helping them remain saved.
3. Jesus won people over and drew them to his Father and himself, so much so that they were willing to give up their lives for him.
4. How effective are you at winning hearts?
5. How to win people's hearts:
   a) Serve them
   b) Spend time
   c) Draw them out and listen
   d) Meet their needs
6. It is not enough for you alone to do this
   a) It is the discipleship group leader's responsibility to see that everyone in his/her group is involved in building relationships with non-Christians.
   b) Leaders need to help their people to be relatable and to draw people in.
      1) Who in the discipleship group is not involved in building relationships and winning others?
      2) Who needs help in this area ("unrelatable," "relationally challenged") versus who needs to repent (selfish, indifferent, loveless or cowardly)?

7. The measure of your leadership is twofold:
   a.) Are you consistently setting the pace and being an example to follow?
   b.) Have you inspired and motivated everyone in your group to do the same?
8. The weekly stats help us measure our leadership.

B. Go and make disciples
1. Encourage them to get to church. When people come to church, they are highly impacted.
2. Get them solid on Jesus. Don't assume that people really know Jesus. Let's learn from the foolish builder who was so anxious to build his house that he failed to build a proper foundation—as a result, his house fell down. We lose too many studies because we fail to build a proper foundation.
   a) Get them to read *More Than a Carpenter*, one of the best books available to present a solid view of Jesus.
   b) Read through the book of John: Bring Jesus alive to them. People who get to know the true Jesus learn to love him—then they will leave their nets and follow him.
3. Get them hungry to learn.
   a) They must be taught the value of reading the Bible on their own. Teach them how to have a quiet time. If they are inspired by their time reading the word, they will very likely become a disciple.
   b) If someone is not eager and motivated, do the Motivation study. (See page 130.)
4. Study the word of God
   a) There are three convictions they absolutely need to gain from the Word study.
      1) The Bible is God's inspired Word.
      2) They should be daily in the Word. No Daily = No Impact.
      3) The Bible is the ultimate authority—over their church, religious traditions, feelings, and family.
   b) Studying the kingdom
      1) People need to be amazed by the kingdom study. Bring the study alive. Reveal it with each passing scripture. Amaze them with God's plan over the centuries for his people. Blow them away with the realization that the kingdom of God is the church—his people, his movement on earth.
      2) They must seek it daily. Explain what this means. (Midweek, Sunday.) Inspire them with what we do in our services; tell them about our classes. Help them with your love for the body.
      3) God expects us to seek first the kingdom. It is to be the priority in our lives.
      4) Help them rearrange their priorities in order to seek first the kingdom. Walk them through their life, and show how they can do this.
   c) Studying discipleship
      1) Discipleship is a breeze when we have laid a proper foundation. Jesus is the rock, the Bible is God's inerrant word, the kingdom is his people on earth.
      2) We really need to hit Mark 1:14-18 about being fishers of men.

*Question:* Have you been a fisher of men?

*Question:* Would Jesus consider you a fisher of men? Would he consider you a disciple?

*Question:* Do you want to be a disciple? When?

3) Help them set a decision date—be urgent.

d) Studying persecution

1) We need to prepare people for persecution. It is better that they hear it from us than from the enemies of the church.

2) We need to be equipped to teach them about persecution and how to handle it.

e) Studying light and darkness

1) They need to be cut by their sin. Complete brokenness may not come until the cross study. They must be convicted by their sin and be convinced that they are not "good persons" (Mark 10:18).

2) Inspire them to desire repentance and to set a baptism date.

f) Studying the cross

1) The cross study must be done with heart, love and passion. We need to help them see how precious they are to God. Help them understand the incredible depth of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and how much our sin cost him and God.

2) People need to be motivated by the cross, not devastated by it. We can't beat them over the head with it, but we need to inspire them by the love of Jesus.

g) Studying the church—there are two convictions they need to gain

1) There is one true church—the true movement of God on earth. That true church is the one that imitates the Bible and the first-century church: Disciples are repentant, baptized believers committed to the movement of God.

2) Who is saved? Talk about friends and family. Only when we have conviction and take a stand on the Word will people become true Christians.

h) Studying lordship:

1) This should be a review to solidify their convictions. There should be no surprises at this study if we do the other studies correctly.

2) In a sense, we are seeing if they can be talked out of their decision.

C. Baptize them!

If we have done the studies correctly, not moving on until they have grasped and accepted the challenge of the previous study, we will baptize solid, true disciples.

D. Teach them to obey everything
   1. Everyone should read *The Lion Never Sleeps*.
   2. Everyone should do the *Deep Convictions* booklet—and keep up with it daily.
   3. Do all four follow-up studies the week after they are baptized.
   4. Have daily contact—don't drop them after baptism.

**III. Are you making disciples and raising up leaders?** If we follow the directions given here, we will definitely have a lasting impact and make awesome disciples for Jesus.

*Roy Larson*
*Boston, USA*

# Leading Your People to Make Disciples

## I. Matthew 28:18-20

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

A. Never tire of hearing this scripture preached. We need to keep it ever before us.

B. Three convictions:

1. Go and make disciples: It doesn't say "Go and *look for* disciples," as in "someone with a spiritual heart," "someone looking for God," etc. Disciples are made, not born. This takes faith and love. Make them—don't go for easy conversions.
2. He didn't say "Go and be busy." Activity doesn't mean anything. Being busy doesn't make any one a good leader.
3. He didn't say "Go and baptize." We need to make disciples. Baptisms will come. Build a ministry of true disciples.

## II. Focus on hearts that respond

A. Any heart can respond. Don't judge the exterior. A hard exterior doesn't necessarily mean a hard heart. Look for the hearts that respond to friendship, love, and the word of God.

B. Don't be intimidated by strong-willed, talented people who don't fall at your feet. Speak the truth to them in love, and see if they respond over time. On the other hand, don't pour yourself into unresponsive people. Stop pouring water into a hole: no matter how much you pour in, it won't fill up.

C. Get them reading. They must be reading John and the rest of the Bible. Some of the books we use can also get them inspired (Max Lucado on the heart, Josh McDowell's *More Than a Carpenter*, Douglas Jacoby's *True and Reasonable* for those with intellectual questions, and David Bercot's *Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up* for the religious). Inspire a hunger and a thirst.

D. Get everyone in your ministry involved in the conversion via relationship. Stop the "lone wolf," "I work alone" mentality.

## III. Transfer deep conviction

A. Only people who make disciples have deep convictions. You must get your convictions very deep—you cannot transfer what you don't have. Are your convictions deep about Jesus? 100 per cent in the Word—Jesus is the only way. Intellectual assent to a fact is not a deep conviction. Are you willing to stake your belief, your heart, your opinion on the word of God? Will you hold to the Word no matter how intense the onslaught of opposition?

B. Deep convictions are planned, purposeful, and tested. They do not happen by accident. Eagerness is not deep conviction.

C. Deep convictions in all the studies:

1. Motivation study. (See page 130.)This opens up hearts. It puts the responsibility of being motivated on them. Call them to it and expect it. Do this study with your Christians—disciples need proper motivation, too!

2. Deep convictions stand up to opposition (Ephesians 4:11-13). Is my ministry mature, strong, grounded, solid, and staying for the long haul? Verse 14: Is this my ministry? Is it me? Am I tossed about by doubt and discouragement, blown around by my fears? An up-and-down leader has an up-and-down ministry. A leader who isn't solid, deep, and convicted cannot build a solid ministry.
3. Satan loves a leader who is easily discouraged. Deep conviction stands up and is not knocked down.

## IV. Take personal responsibility to make disciples

A. Take the responsibility: "If this is to be, it's up to me!"
B. Leadership is about personal responsibility, taking charge. We all know God makes it grow, but it won't grow without a willing leader who is aggressive, planning and taking responsibility.
C. Be persuasive—Jesus was a great persuader. Peter and Paul were great persuaders of men. Are you a good persuader? If not—imitate! Bag the fake spirituality that won't take responsibility, that gets wimpy and fearful of imitation. Get inspired—so inspirational and persuasive that people want to follow you.
D. How motivating are you? Do you realize the power of motivation? Why are you not a good motivator? Is it because of pride and a lack of imitation?
E. The brothers need to be fire-breathing dragons. People need to be fearful of sinning when you're around. Don't sit and wait to get direction. Come up with a plan and bounce it off your disciples.
F. Orchestrate and facilitate. Be organized, be a great planner.
G. Be loyal—express loyalty to those who disciple you.

## V. Get your people doing it

A. Disciples that are doing God's will are joyful and fulfilled. Your responsibility as a leader is to see that you and your group are about your purpose. When we said "Jesus is Lord" at baptism, we signed up for the mission. Demand that your people are focused on the mission! Disciples who lose the mission write their own spiritual epitaphs.
B. Stop making excuses for them. Stop being so disorganized, squishy and wimpy. Expect excellence. Demand it. Rebuke the lack of it.
C. Just how intense, godly and forthright are you? Do your people feel any heat from you? Or do you let them wallow in sin? Do you buy their excuses? Do you make excuses for them?
D. If there are lukewarm people in your ministry, you are lukewarm. If the leader is red hot, so will the people be.

## VI. Baptize them

A. Have a baptism goal in mind for everyone you study with and everyone you meet. Think through and communicate a calendar for everyone:
   1. Lay out the study series
   2. Present it with eagerness
   3. Expect urgency—make it exciting

B. Put the goal of baptism or a decision in their mind early.

C. At the conclusion of the discipleship study, be sure to inspire them and ask for or suggest a baptism/decision date. Help them see what happens at baptism—their names are being written in the book of life!

## VII. Get everyone in your ministry fired up about baptizing

A. Talk about the studies. Lay it out.

B. Who will be baptized?

## VIII. Teach them to obey everything

A. We all need to be taught—every one of us. The work begins at baptism.

B. *Deep Convictions*—90 days of quiet times. Get them started—no rocky starts. Get them the book.

C. Follow-up studies: Do them—be their ministry leader. Do it yourself—don't pass this off.

D. Meals—arrange them with other Christians. Get people together with them, opening up, getting vulnerable. Show them the reality/realness of the kingdom. Facilitate five to seven great relationships with them. We are all responsible for the babies!

E. Don't be sentimental! Call every day. Don't back off after baptism. They took the challenge to become Christians.

F. Don't be naive about how quickly baby Christians can go downhill. Jump on fevers quickly. Deal with all the spiritual health problems. Some of us run our ministries like Third World health care—no modern standards, infection everywhere, inadequate supplies and medicine. Set First World standards—best available care, get in there quickly.

G. Don't be naive. Be aware of Satan's schemes; keep your eyes open. Watch out for persecution, isolation, worldliness. Naiveté kills!

## IX. Conclusion

A. Make true disciples with deep convictions.

B. When people fall away soon after baptism, two questions should be asked:

1. Did you really make a true disciple?
2. Did you stay in/follow up?
3. Did you help them do *Deep Convictions?*
4. Did you do the follow-up studies?

C. Be like a true mother. (1 Thessalonians 2:7).

D. Help them to be grateful for the waters of their baptism.

E. If ministry isn't growing, it's because they aren't obeying the Great Commission.

F. It is more damaging to baptize and have fallaways than it is not to baptize at all.

G. The growing ministry is the happiest ministry of all.

H. Become expert builders who raise up leaders and grow ministries! This leads to faith, health, fire and enthusiasm.

*Roy Larson*
*Boston, USA*

# Becoming Better Fishermen

## I. Two Basic Issues

A. Motivation: love for God and love for man (Matthew 22:36-40)
   1. Building relationships
   2. Heart of evangelism: initial relationships, deepening until they are in the kingdom (and even deeper as disciples)

B. Method: learning to fish (Mark 1:17)

## II. Two Kinds of Fishing Techniques

A. Cold Contact Evangelism
   1. "As you go" (Acts 17:17)
   2. "Worthy person search" (Matthew 10:11)

B. Relationship Evangelism
   1. Introducing relatives to Jesus (John 1:40-42)
   2. Telling friends and family what God has done for you (Mark 5:18-20)
   3. Developing a relationship with a new person from your "as you go" search

## III. Four Kinds of Relationship Development

A. Prospective Relationships
   1. Cold contacts: those we are just meeting
   2. Trust God, love people, keep fishing daily

B. Casual Relationships
   1. Newer contact, trying to develop a relationship and spiritual interest
   2. Some type of regular contact needed to move them along (many types possible)

C. Friendly Relationships
   1. Interested in a relationship with you and/or spiritual matters
   2. How do you move them into kingdom activities and a one-on-one Bible study?

D. Spiritual Relationships
   1. Attending activities, studying with you
   2. How do you move them into the waters of baptism?

## IV. Two Final Issues

A. "Fishing Holes" (put in your own specifics and names)
   1. Family
   2. Neighborhood
   3. Job
   4. School-related activities for your kids
   5. Other activities involving your children
   6. Activities you are involved in personally
   7. Community activities
   8. Other

B. Presenting the "Lure"
   1. The "Lure"
      a) Ultimately, Christ
      b) Begins with *you* (2 Corinthians 3:2; Titus 2:10)
      c) You must be strong with God and full of his light and his love for souls to defeat your insecurities
   2. Presenting the "lure" in each of the four categories
      a) Prospective Relationships: list places; conversation starter approaches; how to get names and numbers; how to follow up
      b) Casual Relationships: contacts/activities to use; conversations which help; using other people to help; dealing with a "stall"

c) Friendly Relationships: same issue as above in b). Think it through.

d.) Spiritual Relationships: relationship deepening; widening; changing to a HOT study

### V. Schedule to Make It Happen

A. Keep up-to-date list of names in the four categories (*weekly*).

B. Write the plan beside each person's name at the beginning of every week.

C. Write the name/plan in a weekly calendar.

D. Set appropriate goals/plans in each of the four categories.

## The Result: Focus, Fun and Fruit

*Gordon Ferguson*
*Boston, USA*

# Group Fruitfulness–Getting Your Group Fruitful

## I. Introduction

A. One of the challenges of being a disciple and helping others to be disciples is getting spiritually balanced in different areas of our lives.

B. Sometimes we understand the balance needed but find it difficult to put it into practice. For example, balancing ministry and family responsibilities is an obvious need, but doing it consistently is challenging.

C. In other cases, we may not see the balance needed between two related areas. For example, at one time in the kingdom we understood the mission of evangelism much better than the mission to the poor and needy. Thankfully, we have learned to balance and blend both missions.

D. An area of balance that is of paramount importance is that between personal fruitfulness and group fruitfulness. Likely, we all feel the concern to bear "personal" fruit much more than "group" fruit. Part of our lack of balance may be due to a limited understanding of the biblical teaching about group fruitfulness.

E. This lesson, given by Randy McKean at a staff meeting, will help us to see the issue more clearly. This will make us more fruitful and happier at the same time.

## II. Group Fruitfulness

A. John 1:35ff

1. In this passage, with whom is Jesus pleased?
   a) With all parties: himself (he was into the mission), Andrew, Peter, etc.
   b) It took awhile for Jesus to pull Peter in, but Andrew's initial outreach introduced him to Jesus, who then had the opportunity to win Peter.
2. The point is that Jesus felt good about all of the other people in this account (Nathaniel, etc.), and not just Andrew as the more obvious "visitor bringer" at the moment.
3. Bottom line, the influence exerted for good was exerted by different *groups* of disciples. No individual has the power to influence a person as much as a whole group does.

B. John 4:34ff

1. Both the sower and the reaper rejoiced together.
2. In a sense, Jesus is describing "gang tackling."
3. Sometimes we have defined "personal fruit" in such a narrow way that many conversions don't "qualify" as the personal fruit of *anyone*. (If we are performance oriented, we lose some of the joy of being part of a group effort that resulted in someone's salvation!)

C. John 6:1ff

1. Verse 5—Where are *we* going to buy bread?
2. Note the "we"—they felt like a group doing significant things together.
3. Of course, the worry about the details of finances shows that the *administrators* were present!
4. Verse 8—Another group member spoke up (group participation).

D. Acts 16:11ff

1. Note that the text mentions "we" a number of times.

2. Paul did not feel that Lydia was "his" fruit and that Luke had messed up by not having his own visitors that day!
3. The same may be said of the jailer's conversion.
4. Who gets "credit" for his conversion—Paul or Silas? Who *spoke* first? Whose *singing* most impacted the jailer?
5. I am being a bit facetious here, but you get the point. We can be so worried about how to define personal fruit, that we miss the miracle of helping another soul move toward the kingdom.
6. It is not an either/or situation—it is a both/and endeavor to bear personal *and* group fruit.

E. 1 Corinthians 3:5ff
1. Both Paul and Apollos were *awesome* men.
2. Who is God pleased with more—the planter or the waterer?
3. See what our thinking is—we can miss the point that *God* makes it grow and see both of the men as essential.
4. We are *fellow* workers; no one worker is more important than the other.
5. We are the Body of Christ, working as a body to bring others to him. (It should be obvious that no group fruit can be born if individual disciples don't bring visitors and set up studies. However, it takes planters and sowers.)

## III. Applications

A. We need some conceptual changes in our people and in our leaders on this point.

B. It will not be done in one lesson, no matter how well you may preach it.

C. It will take spaced repetition to straighten out misconceptions and inadequate understanding.

D. Our mission groups or discipleship groups have to develop a *group* mentality. Everyone must understand and work toward helping others in our groups become personally fruitful.

E. We need the defined group, and then we need a leader of that group who has proved himself in the mission of the kingdom. He knows how to study the Bible with non-Christians.

F. Have a defined group, a led group and a functioning group.

G. A weekly Bible study group of the traditional type is needed for the campus and most singles.

H. For others, a weekly meeting of some sort helps the group stay focused, unified and productive. (The exact nature of the group's function will need to be worked out with the advice of the top leaders within a given group.)

I. Have the mind-set that to help others to be fruitful is to be fruitful yourself. Group fruit allows us to be a part in fruit bearing. For that, we must rejoice!

J. We need the calls, the questions, the accountability to make the groups effective. Group fun and social activities are part of the equation as well.

K. Bring in someone from another group to help you connect with a non-Christian when needed (who shares something in common). Don't be territorial.

L. Have the group heart to move people through the studies. The group should be doing what it takes to convert someone.

M. Function as a smaller group even in the presence of larger groups. Sit together on Sundays or meet together for fellowship. Make sure that the larger group is the priority; don't be cliquish.

N. Have a celebration of group fruitfulness every time someone is baptized.

## IV. The challenge: Have every group fruitful by a set date.

A. Develop daily prayer lists.

B. Discuss and agree on a plan of action for the whole group.

C. Bottom line, the deeper issue is urgency based on loving souls.

D. Think about the movie *Ransom* in this light—if it was *your* child who was lost, you would move heaven and earth to get the child back. That is the mind-set we *must* have for all lost people, for they are someone's children, and certainly God longs for them to be *his!*

E. Love for the lost makes us urgent to get them into the kingdom; love for the saved means you want them to become successful. These are *huge* issues.

F. You have to get the machinery in motion. Train the people, and keep it moving in that direction.

G. Present a balanced view—read John 15:1-8 to emphasize personal responsibility and examine both your life and your motives.

## V. Conclusion

A. The need to bear personal fruit is obvious, but no more obvious than the need to bear group fruit.

B. Let's be involved in all phases of evangelism, do our best, and refuse to worry about who gets the "credit."

C. We are the planters and the waterers—God is the one who makes it grow.

D. He wants each of us to be active in sharing our faith and exerting any influence we can to help others into the kingdom. He clearly wants both planter and waterer, sower and reaper to be glad *together!* Let's do it!

*Randy McKean*
*Boston, USA*

# Working with the Fallaway

**I. What are the causes of falling away?**
(*Note:* We must make sure that we are dealing with true causes, not *symptoms*. And keep in mind Romans 2:5ff—God holds the individual responsible for falling away, no matter what.)

A. Shallow convictions (Luke 11)
B. Strangleholds of the world (Luke 11)
C. Shepherds, through harsh leadership, can scatter the sheep (Ezekiel 34).
D. Causing another to fall by your sin, and also related, a lack of forgiveness (both in Luke 17:1ff)
E Person gets seduced
   1. Demas goes back into the world (2 Timothy 4:10)
   2. False teachers (2 Peter 2:1-3)
F. Starvation (1 Corinthians 3:2)
   1. Lack of proper appetite
   2. Lack of proper diet—both milk and meat (That's why attendance is much more than numbers present or absent.)

**II. Find out what the causes were**—talk to those who have worked with them, and go in as prepared as possible.

A. Treat the causes, the diseases, not the symptoms.
B. Make a determination as to who you need to help close the loop. Call in additional help, and disciple your people to avoid having people feel "trapped."

**III. Talk about the consequences of falling away.**

A. Lostness—too many leave without understanding that they are lost.
   1. Do they have the right conviction?
   2. What have we done to deepen their convictions on this point?
B. Personal degeneration—into the pits
   1. 2 Peter 2:20-22
   2. Divorce, adultery, removal from their own children, etc. may result.
   3. People have to be told what is going to happen to them, and even though they don't agree to start with, they may well remember it all later.
C. Body impact—1 Corinthians 12
   1. There are going to be casualties, to be sure, but it will not happen without pain inflicted on the church.
   2. Talk with disciples most affected about how to view the situation, knowing how it impacts both relationships and evangelism. Satan is powerful, and we need to be aware of his schemes in order to defeat him.

**IV. What is our commitment to fallaways?**

A. Have I sought information about their situation?
B. Have I communicated love to them, and the value of their life to me, to God and to the church?
C. Do I have a correct perspective on how much to do, and when to let go?

**V. Leave the light on and the door open!**
(The Parable of the Lost Son shows the example.) Don't get resentful and take the falling away personally. This causes us to turn a cold shoulder to them, and it prohibits them from coming back.

*Wyndham Shaw*
*Boston, USA*

# Reaching Out to the Weak

*And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone (1 Thessalonians 5:14).*

## I. Setting Up the Appointment

A. Varies according to the openness about where they are spiritually.
   1. If they are open about their struggle, be direct in the invitation.
   2. If they are not open and might be easily threatened about getting with you, be more casual in the set-up.

B. Be lighthearted and warm, not somber and heavy.
   1. Some of us really have to push ourselves on this one.
   2. The "gloom and doom" approach is not what they most need!

## II. Setting the Atmosphere

A. Share what is going on in your life—especially in areas that you think they might identify with (job, family, interests, etc.).

B. Be general in your remarks to them, in order to let them share what is near the surface.
   1. "What's going on in your life?"
   2. "How can I help?

C. Once you are on a spiritual track, share from your own life and the lives of others about times of struggle.
   1. Let them know that they are not *weird* or highly unusual.
   2. Keep thinking of what they would most closely identify with.

## III. Getting to the Heart

A. Nothing judgmental in your attitudes or demeanor (including body posture)
   1. They are most likely fearful of really being open, so be careful (full of care) on this.
   2. Think about how difficult it is for you to be open and why (background in the world).

B. Listen mostly in the early going—let them get it all out (if possible).
   1. Ask questions for clarification if needed.
   2. Reflective listening—show that you care.

C. Avoid responses that will shut them down.
   1. "You shouldn't feel that way." (It may be true, but no use dealing with symptoms).
   2. "That's terrible!"
   3. "You did what?!"

D. Keep sharing from your life and the lives of others—knowing that others have been through similar struggles and have made it is of inestimable help.

## IV. Giving Direction

A. Do it with prayer.
   1. Begin your "giving direction" time with a prayer.
   2. Feel free to stop and ask God's direction or help at any point.
      a.) If you hit an impasse with them.
      b.) If they don't seem to connect emotionally with their condition.
      c.) Just to help drive the points home and to soften their heart.

B. Do it with the Bible open.
   1. They need conviction and faith—maybe one more than the other, but find the passages that address it.

2. Have them read the passages themselves.
3. Ask questions like: "What do you think God is saying to you here?"

C. Do it with confidence and vision.
1. "You are going to be fine" has a profound impact on someone who has lost hope (unless you say it before you have listened—then it's a pat answer to them).
2. "I have seen the same problem before, and here is how we are going to solve it."

## V. Arranging the Follow-Up

A. Who else do they need to get with?
1. Professional counseling
2. A higher leader (elder, ministry leader)
3. Someone with whom they are not resolved (You may need to go with them.)
4. Another appointment with you?

B. Assignments.
1. Bible study or book to read—be specific with this one.
2. Prayer (and maybe fasting)—help them know the specifics.
3. Reaching out to others who need help
   a.) Someone to serve (maybe much less fortunate than themselves)
   b.) Someone to reach out to
4. Be practical and not overwhelming in the assignments!

D. Find out how they are feeling about the follow-up directives.

E. Find out how they are feeling generally after getting with you.

F. Give appropriate challenges (set this to their spiritual attitudes and conditions at the time).

G. Keep the vision in there, and let them borrow your faith.

*Gordon Ferguson*
*Boston, USA*

# Effective Group Study Leadership

## I. Ingredients of an Effective Group Study

A. Relevant to ordinary spiritual needs
   1. Not the time to discuss doctrinal points
   2. Instead share how biblical principles apply to our spiritual needs

B. Personal
   1. Members should learn to share their feelings about Jesus, others and themselves.
   2. When this is done in an accepting group along biblical guidelines, the results are amazing.

C. Powerful: Since the gospel is God's power for salvation (Romans 1:16), it must be the focal point of our sharing.

D. Interesting
   1. If we are asking people to give up their time for this study, they should not be bored!
   2. Enthusiasm in the leader will permeate the entire group.

E. Follow up
   1. As the spiritual openness develops in the group, members should be encouraged to continue this communication with one another in other settings.
   2. Spiritual sharing will increase the appetite for more of the same.

## II. Suggestions for Leading a Group Study

A. Be enthusiastic.

B. Relax. Keep your sense of humor.

C. Always be ready with questions which will stimulate discussion and promote thought.

D. Keep the discussion moving by asking several people to contribute.

E. Be sensitive to shy members. Encourage them to participate, but don't embarrass them.

F. Listen to what people are really saying.

G. Allow people to express what is on their mind, but keep to the subject.

H. Let the Bible speak for itself. It has more authority than your opinion!

I. Summarize the discussion at the end of the study.

J. Don't be shocked by what anyone does or says.

K. If someone gives the wrong answer, avoid correcting him sharply. If you think a correction is necessary, do it gently with a preface such as, "Have you thought of it from this angle...?"

*Gordon Ferguson*
*Boston, USA*

# Parents Who Make a Difference

**I. There are many battles to fight in the kingdom, but the battle for our own children is one of the most important.**

**II. 1 Samuel 30:1-6**

A. Note verse 6. Although David was such a hero, the men were ready to kill him when their own families were threatened.

B. David was out fighting battles, but the home front was left unprotected.

C. As leaders, what we do with our own sons and daughters will determine what we are able to do in helping the children of other disciples.

**III. Sad situations with parents today.**

A. *Ignorance* is one of the big culprits, lack of knowledge of the Bible and its principles.

B. The other main culprit is *arrogance*—knowing the principles and not putting them into practice, thinking that somehow it will work out anyway, or being too self-absorbed to pay the price of training the family.

**IV. Ephesians 6:1-4**—Wherever we are, we must do all that we can to offset the mistakes we have made.

A. This is a faith issue for some of us who have lost hope.

B. Back in 1 Samuel 30, David found strength in the Lord and delivered the children by the power of God.

C. The men of David were tempted to become embittered, as we are when our children are not doing well, but we have a choice in the matter. Take responsibility and do everything you can do to help them.

D. Differences to make in our children

1. Spiritually—get them "in the Lord." Nothing else is more important.
2. Emotionally—Do not exasperate your children, and meet their emotional needs. Emotional happiness and maturity comes as a result of the right kind of "nurturing" them (as some versions translate Ephesians 6:4).

**V. The ten commandments of effective parenting** (from a conversation with Sam Laing)

A. Develop the child's relationship with God (1 Chronicles 28:9).

1. Kids will not pick it up by osmosis. They must be trained.
2. Much more is involved than making them go to church. If they don't like church, they don't know God.
3. Illustration—David training Solomon by showing him where he wrote the various Psalms and why.
5. You must set the example and share your own struggles and victories.
6. My conversation with my son Sam when his cousin fell away: Get determined and not discouraged. (Blair has been restored and said that Sam had a big influence on him.)
7. Early morning quiet times together.

B. Show the importance of family over everything but God (Deuteronomy 6:4-7).

1. Sam said that he could always interrupt a meeting if he really needed help. (Can your child reach you when he has a need?)
2. Getting up early with Sam really impacted him and demonstrated the importance of family.

C. Become your child's best friend.
   1. David and Solomon; Paul and Timothy; God and Moses; all of these were best friends.
   2. Kids don't remain little kids, but they can remain best friends.
   3. Vulnerability is a key ingredient, and getting involved in their world is another.
   4. Both praise and correction must be clear. God said of Jesus, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 17:5). Do you express this to your children or only point out their needs to improve?

D. Allow them the freedom to make mistakes (Colossians 3:12-14).
   1. In the Colossians passage, these qualities are all applied when mistakes are made.
   2. Sam made comments about how he felt that he would be corrected but never rejected.
   3. We cannot stifle our kids—they must be able to express what is really in their hearts and lives.
   4. When the discipline is over, the incident must be in the past. Grace must be demonstrated.

E. Teach lessons from real life situations with the Bible in hand.
   1. Show how the principles apply. Mistakes can be stepping stones to victories.
   2. Correction with explanation and direction.
   3. Attitudes must be the focal point of the correction, not simply the outward action.

F. Respect must be built both ways (1 Peter 2:17).
   1. As the children age, they cannot be treated as toddlers.
   2. Treat them with respect by being honest and up-front.
   3. Embarrassing situations must be avoided, which calls for getting input from the kids themselves.
   4. For all of us, being treated with respect is a key.
   5. Let kids make some decisions, and more as they age.
   6. Be humble and vulnerable when you have messed up.
   7. Team decisions are extremely healthy and productive. Give the kids the opportunity for input.

G. Be affectionate and expressive to the children (2 Corinthians 6:8-10).
   1. Some men especially have a difficult time being expressive, even with their wives, to say nothing of the children.
   2. Jesus is our role model, not our parents who may have set the wrong example.
   3. "I love you more than you love me" is a friendly competition in the Shaw family.

H. Notice that they are growing up.
   1. Make the adjustments and make the use of the limited opportunities.
   2. Provide a "no regrets" atmosphere.

I. Provide confidence through a godly marriage.
   1. Nothing provides more security.
   2. Your marriage is the greenhouse of security, the thermostat of their happiness and the model of their future families.

J. Encourage the success of each child (Romans 12:3-21).
   1. The Romans qualities all contribute to success.
   2. Encouraging each child in his or her own gifts is the most important issue here.
   3. Let them be who they are, and help them develop themselves.

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*Boston, USA*

# Helping the Physically Challenged Disciple

## I. Realities

A. People have physical challenges. Sickness is a reality. Disabilities are realities.

B. Chronic illnesses and other chronic physical challenges take an emotional and relational toll on those who have them and on those who live with them.

C. Studies have shown that an estimated thirty to thirty-five percent of the adult population faces some on-going physical challenge (PC). This means two things:

1. We all have a substantial number of PC people to work with.
2. Being PC is still a minority status (with all the challenges that brings).

D. As people age, PCs increase, and so, as our movement ages and our church ages, we will have more PC issues to deal with, not less.

E. Illness can mask other problems or can be used deceitfully.

1. Psychosomatic illness does exist.
2. Hypochondria is real.
3. Some people do exaggerate illness or pain in order to manipulate others, to excuse themselves from activity or to avoid responsibility.
4. Some people have a real illness, but for various reasons don't really want to get well.

F. Working effectively with people always takes into consideration *all* of the realities.

## II. Biblical Teaching

Not only must we take into consideration the realities, but we also must take into consideration biblical teaching ("the whole counsel of God") and the qualities of Christian character.

A. Compassion is vital.

1. It is found in God in abundance (Psalm 103:13, Psalm 116:5).
2. It is not found in most of us naturally, but must be put on (Colossians 3:12).
3. Jesus was filled with it and demonstrated it continually, especially with the sick (Matthew 15:32, 14:14, 20:34, Mark 1:41).Typical passage: "Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!'" (Mark 1:41).
4. We are not ready to counsel the sick if we are not *filled with* compassion.

B. Wisdom and judgment are essential.

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:14 teaches "different strokes for different folks." (Some need support and affirmation; others need a challenge; many need a combination.)
2. We should go in with compassion and a listening ear (James 1:19, Proverbs 18:13).
   a) This gives us the opportunity to get in touch with where people really are.
   b) It gives them the opportunity to feel really understood.
      1) Nothing is more important in working with people than causing them to feel you hear them and understand them.
      2) Brings *emotional clearance.* Until this happens they cannot hear you. All your wonderful insight and excellent direction will fall on deaf ears.

My approach: Assume the best with people. Operate on that assumption *until proven wrong.*

3. Once you have heard people and helped them feel understood, there is more you can do. There is truth you can speak. Two things will be true:
   a) You will know much better *WHAT* truth they need to hear.
   b) They will be much more likely to hear you . . . because you will have built trust.

## III. What Do We Need to Teach the PC Person?

A. Realize that circumstances alter your life (*bios*), but they don't end your life (*zoë*).
B. The principles of 2 Corinthians 1, 4, and 12 and Philippians 4.
C. Your illness can become a vehicle through which God works in most unexpected ways.
D. It is great when people understand and are supportive. But realize two things:
   1. No one ever can fully understand.
   2. You can still live well even if you are misunderstood. (Disciples are always misunderstood people.)
E. Sin is still your greatest challenge. Deal with sin biblically.
F. Whatever the challenge, God is always greater.
G. Whatever happens, don't lose your sense of humor. Proverbs 17:22 says that it is a gift from God. If you don't have one, buy one; get trained to have one; do whatever it takes!
H. Reading *Mind Change, This Doesn't Feel Like Love, Power in Weakness, You Gotta Keep Dancing.*

## IV. Seven Great Temptations of Physically Challenged People

(inspired by material from Linda Howard, San Diego, Calif.)

A. Self-pity—poor me, poor me, poor me
B. Resentment—especially towards God
C. Deceitfulness—using your challenge to excuse yourself from things you really don't want to do anyway
D. Faithlessness—"God can't use me anymore."
E. Using your challenge as a license to sin—"I just can't help being angry or bitter."
F. Self-righteousness/pride—"I'm more spiritual than others because of what I've gone through. Others just couldn't possibly understand what I now understand."
G. Bitterness/an unforgiving spirit—especially of those who don't understand or are not sensitive enough.

*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

*Thomas Jones*
*Boston, USA*

# Starting a Physically Challenged Ministry

**I. Ask all sector leaders to give you a list of physically challenged disciples.**

**II. Have them mark the names of those who are strong spiritually and could provide leadership.**

**III. Meet with the strong disciples**

A. Report on what Boston, DC, London and Milwaukee have done. (Call these churches beforehand for details.)

B. Discuss and clarify your goals for the PC (physically challenged) ministry:
   1. To provide hope and vision
   2. To provide camaraderie and encouragement
   3. To encourage fruitfulness

**IV. Plan your first PC devotional to launch the ministry**

A. Print up something to give to each PC disciple in the church.

B. Encourage those who are discipling PC people to come.

C. Have several people share.

D. Have someone speak who is PC but who is an example of faith and overcoming.

E. Use anyone who is PC who has musical talent.

F. Have one of the elders or another key ministry leader there.

**V. Communicate clearly to all ministry leaders.** This is not to supplant their ministries but is to supplement them and help PC disciples be even more useful in their local regions.

**VI. Ongoing**

A. Plan devotionals at least every other month.

B. Have ministry leaders select a "PC rep" from each region in the church. Have this group meet every month to stay in touch with needs and share encouragement.

*Thomas Jones*
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# Building a Great Teen Ministry

Parents, imagine coming home from work one day to an empty, eerily quiet house. The sound of your children's familiar voices, the stereo and the TV are all silent. Instead, a ransom note taped to the refrigerator is your only greeting. The perpetrators are demanding an exorbitant sum. How could you begin to describe the panic that would seize your heart at that moment? Would any price be too high to have your children safe at home with you again?

We need to realize that Satan himself is working overtime to make this scenario a spiritual reality in each of our lives. He longs for the day when he will take our children captive. His methods have become more and more blatant as the centuries pass. Peer pressure to sin at the middle- and high-school levels is at an all-time high. The aggressive, shameless sin of teenagers makes what used to be unthinkable now commonplace.

In order to rescue our children from spiritual destruction, no price can be too high. As the family of God, even those of us without teenagers need to respond to the plea for help from our spiritual brothers and sisters to save our spiritual nieces and nephews. Every disciple is responsible, as a servant (Matthew 25:35-40), discipler of parents or role model to teens, to be involved in this ministry.

Teen ministries are getting larger each year as we grow as a movement. There are more teens than ever coming to Christ. As a church, we must provide a teen ministry. Christian teens desperately need strong relationships with each other. Then they can feel the strength in their numbers and they see other teens facing and overcoming the same challenges (1 Peter 5:9).

I believe you should build a teen ministry right the first time (Luke 14:28-30). I don't mean that you won't make mistakes, but that you will find the solutions to the needs and issues that come up. In Boston, we have had a teen ministry for over 15 years and we have learned a lot from experience. We have built on these experiences. Starting with that foundation, we have learned that it is then up to those involved in the ministry to pray, put their full heart into it, implement ambitious plans and seek advice. There is much more to say about building a great teen ministry than what's written here, but here are some morsels we have learned.

## Teen Leadership

Adults working in the teen ministry need to be shepherds, not hired hands (John10:1-15). This ministry is not a stepping stone for other leadership. Rather, it is a labor of love.

As leaders, you must be imitatable because teens are the most impressionable disciples in the church. Be personally inspiring: totally sold out for Jesus, spiritually ambitious, full of energy and in good physical shape. You are, as well as the Christian parents, what the teens see as Christian role models.

Believe in each one of the teenagers, especially the ones you directly work with. Most teens on the outside can be shallow. Every teen on the inside has deep purposes. A major role for a teen leader is to facilitate drawing out a teenager's heart and purpose for God (Proverbs 20:5). It takes listening to them, opening up your own heart, prayer, Bible study and having fun with them.

Run your ministry in such a way that the disciples not only long for the fellowship, but also desire to bring many of their friends.

## A Tidbit for the Parents

Parents are responsible for their teenager's soul. The teen ministry does not raise your teen, but it is a vital asset in helping them get to Heaven.

Parents should have discipling times with their teens weekly, as well as having quiet times with them periodically. You should have talks with them at random times, as well as having special, fun times with them to take away any legalism in the relationship. Not only do they need you as a parent, but as a best friend as well.

My biggest challenge for parents is to educate yourselves about raising your teenager(s). One way to learn is through fellowshiping with other families who have teen disciples to see what they have done that has been successful—and you can even learn from each other's mistakes. Second, you can learn by reading Christian books on raising teens, like *Raising Awesome Kids in Troubled Times* by Sam and Geri Laing.

## Unity with Parents and Teen Leadership

Parents and teen leaders always need to be unified. They should form a dynamic spiritual team. Unity takes initiation.

Teen leaders, you must respect the parents. Initiate with them by phone or in the fellowship about the direction of your discipling. When talking to the parent about their teen, first build the teen up and then talk about how to better facilitate growth in them.

Parents, two simple ways you can initiate to build unity. First, give input to the teen leader about your teen so that they can more accurately disciple him or her. Some of my best discipling times have come from parents' input. Second, listen to input from teen leaders. You are very emotionally tied to your children, which is a good thing, but it means that you don't always see them clearly. An objective view from a teen leader will give you more truth about how your teen is doing spiritually (and you can *work* with the truth, no matter how good or bad it is).

In my ministry I've seen this kind of unity produce unprecedented growth in Christian teenagers. I've also seen many teenagers gain the conviction to be faithful to God for a lifetime because of parents and teen leaders working together in one spirit.

## Well-Defined Standard of Teenage Discipleship (2 Timothy 4:1-5)

About two years ago my wife and I were asked to coordinate the teen ministry in the Boston church, as well as directly work with the teens in a super region. The teen ministry in our new region was lukewarm. I did a lesson on specifically defining a hot disciple and called everyone to that standard. As a result, two teens left, but the rest repented and decided to be hot disciples. Since then, we have been consistently fruitful, including restoring one of the two who left, have had very few fallaways and have seen the teen disciples grow in great ways.

The expectations need to be defined aloud to the teen ministry. The leaders need to hold the ministry to those standards with consistent reminders, but always giving grace. Teenage disciples want to do great things for God and they need and want high expectations. When teens make their decision for Christ, they are making an adult decision and need to be held to it. As you understand the emotional makeup of each teen, so you can apply the Scriptures accurately with care and compassion.

In studying the Bible with teenagers who are not yet disciples, make sure that they are being converted to Jesus and not to their parents' faith or to the fellowship. The best gauge is that, as you are studying with them, you see distinct changes, i.e. repentance. Don't look for perfection, but look for spiritual depth. And most of all, don't take shortcuts!

### Creativity and Excellence (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 3:23)

Honor God with your teen events. When there are excellent events, teens know it, feel it and feel taken care of. Have a goal that there will be no other teen event going on in your state that will be better planned or better run.

It all starts with a well-organized teen calendar, then having high standards for each event. It's important to get the best speakers available, the best entertainment available and the best material available to make your event hot and relatable. Don't give them hype, but substance. Don't be afraid of the hard work it takes to put on a great event! Excellence doesn't just happen—it's created through prayer and hard work.

Create opportunities that draw out the talents of the teenagers. In Boston we have an excellent band, a dance group and Kingdom Teen News (KTN). (KTN is a video we put out twice a year that features teens as news anchors, news subjects or bit-part actors.) Each of these groups can be used for your teen events to make them more creative.

Here's a compendium of groups and events that we have found successful here in Boston: a well-organized and defined young teen ministry, meetings for parents of teenagers, teen leader training times, a Christmas banquet for families with teens, a mother-daughter fashion show, semiannual evangelistic youth rallies, a week-long camp, a college fair for juniors and seniors, all-church teen devotionals, a senior banquet, sports days, Red Sox games, and we have just started d-groups for each school that has more than four disciples—one morning per week they meet before school to have prayer and Bible study together.

### Have a Dream

When my wife and I were asked to coordinate the teen ministry in the Boston church, I wrote down all the dreams I had for it. I presented them to the whole teen ministry, and it inspired them. So far, all but a few of those dreams have been implemented. I can't say enough about how helpful it was to write the dreams down. It gave us something to shoot for and a motivation to get things done. I urge you to write down what your vision is for a very high-powered, fruit-bearing, character-building teen ministry. Put these dreams before your group and start making them happen.

### To the Teenagers

I have a message for all the teenagers: God has a personal dream for each one of you. You are precious in God's eyes. He has a future for you and plans to prosper you (Jeremiah 29:11). Therefore, I want to challenge and encourage each one of you to identify your spiritual and personal dreams for this year and for the rest of your life. Think these dreams through, pray for them, then write them down. Make copies of them and put favorite pictures of yourself on them. Then give those sheets out to people close to you and ask them to pray for your dreams. (Make sure you give a copy to your parents, your discipleship partner and teen disciples you are close to.)

Seeing your dreams on paper will give you something to aim for, something to shoot for and give you more courage to face today's challenges. Through this, God can mold your character to be what he wants you to be for the present and the future.

In conclusion, build from what you and others have learned and allow God to move (1 Corinthians 3:5-9). We have seen teens who seemed spiritually immovable become disciples. We've seen families totally united in Christ. We've seen non-Christian parented teens become disciples. We've seen preteens coming into the teen ministry looking forward to becoming disciples because of what they see in the teen ministry. The result of a great teen ministry is more souls won for Christ, very grateful parents who see their sons and daughters become Christians, and stronger families.

The teen ministries today are effecting thousands of souls, and in the future it will be millions of souls. Remember that David did not finish building the LORD's Temple; it was his son Solomon who finished the work. The convictions we build and influence we provide now will determine the convictions and influence the teens will have later as they study the Bible with our children and disciple and lead us in our old age. Let not the next generation fail because of our negligence. Rather, we must help them to prosper because of our righteousness. It's about all of us having a heart for the teen ministry.

*Phil Arsenault*
*Boston, USA*

# PART 3



# Inspiring Lessons

# Winning the Loyalty of Your Group

## Introduction

A. Loyalty for some it is a bad word.

B. God considers it a great quality.

C. When we really think about it, we admire those who stick by and stand by someone through thick and thin!

D. God is loyal to us. He stays by us! (2 Timothy 2:11-13)

E. Loyalty is actually a matter of unity and of being the same in Spirit and mind-set.

1. In the Old Testament, we see God's very high expectation of loyalty between leaders and followers. God expected it, and dealt quickly and usually severely with those who destroyed unity. (Numbers 12:1-2)
2. Jesus' last recorded full prayer was about unity.
3. Paul said, in Ephesians 4:3: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."
4. Paul had strong words for those who would destroy loyalty in others thereby destroying the unity. (Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10-11). Paul felt strongly about this matter because God feels so strongly about it!

F. The question is: How do you win the loyalty of your group and maintain it?

1. Some want to demand it.
2. Some hope people want it and that it will *somehow* happen.
3. Neither will work for long!

G. Paul gives us an incredible example from his own life in the book of 2 Corinthians. An entire church mutinied against Paul and the gospel. We have his letter to them. In the end, Paul won them back to himself and to the gospel!

H. His opponents said of Paul:

1. He walked in the flesh.
2. He was a coward. He wrote like thunder; in person, was a mouse!
3. He didn't take support. Rather, he lowered himself by working.
4. He was not an original apostle.
5. He was not qualified to teach.
6. He had no credentials.
7. He was boastful and proud.
8. He embezzled funds. (Insinuated)

## Paul's Solution

A. Don't "lord it over" them, love them! Read 2 Corinthians 1:24-2:4; 3:2; 12:14-15

1. Examples: Husbands/Wives; Parents/Kids (relationships that work)
2. Insecure people "lord it over" others.
3. People respond to love. It is the one thing they have missed in this world. Most young leaders become insecure and harsh. You will lose every time! They need to feel your love for God and for them. They will feel your strength through your love.

B. The word of God is the standard, not you! Read 2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:5.

1. Do you act like you are important, or do you act like the Word is important?

2. Example: A brother in my ministry was highly talented and sacrificed a lot. One problem he had: Are we the kingdom of God? Pretty big problem! I answered: The Word is the seed. Plant it and it will grow. If we remain faithful to the Word, then we are the kingdom of God. That was okay. He needed emotional proof, however. He needed to see my life, my struggles, and how the Word was my standard for marriage, discipleship and etc.
3. We as leaders must make sure that we preach the gospel as the standard, not ourselves as the standard. Our people must see us submitting in all things to the authority of the word of God!

C. There must be no hypocrisy.
Read 2 Corinthians 4:2-3.
1. An older brother had seen much and had become critical and quietly negative. He was not really trusting and was frightened of me from the pulpit.
2. I taught him to be open with his thoughts and to test everything I said with the word of God. That was okay, but emotionally he needed to see my consistency and that I lived out in front of him what I preached.
3. People can smell hypocrisy and it kills their trust and their loyalty! Let's be leaders with no hypocrisy.

D. We must always be open with our lives.
1. Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9; 4:7-13; 6:3-10; 11:23-29. It expresses what he was going through and what he had gone through.
2. *Examples:* Tough times of persecution and how you felt. Tough health times and the emotions you went through. Your people can identify with you and feel with you and for you. They can see your vulnerability.
3. We fear that we look weak or that they will somehow struggle. Paul wasn't worried about it. He knew it strengthened his church and his relationship with them! Be open with your group.

E. Delight in your weaknesses!
1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.
2. We need to be open with our weaknesses and sins, and with where we need to grow and are struggling to grow! Share specific examples from your own life and about how your openness allowed you to get the help you needed.

F. People need to be proud of their leaders.
1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:12: "take pride in us..."
2. When are people proud of their leaders?
   a) When they put their lives on the line—and win!
   b) When they are cool as Christians.
   c) When the leaders are their heroes. Do you think of ways to be a hero?
   d) They need to feel great about bringing their friends to see you.

G. Leaders need to compliment their groups.
Read 2 Corinthians 8:7: "just as you excel at everything..."
1. Paul paid compliments to the Corinthian Church. This church had really hurt Paul. He had been through

rough times because of them, but he could still look past his own hurt and compliment the congregation. He didn't become bitter. He saw what they did well and he bragged on them.

2. People thrive on compliments.
   a) Praise those who do well in their attendance.
   b) If you teach classes and have tests, take those who do the best out to dinner!
   c) Even if they don't reach their goals, if they have worked and tried, then praise them for what they have learned from the experience. Goals are there not just to be reached, but to stretch us to see our true potential! People get fired up knowing that you see that they are giving their best.
   d) Tell them the different talents that you see in them. Don't miss an opportunity to brag about your group. Comparisons are great as long as you don't present other groups in a bad light.

## Conclusion

With these qualities in us as leaders, our people will gladly give their loyalty to their leaders. As the Word promises in Judges 5:2, God will be glorified with great loyalty in our groups!

*Dean Farmer*
*Berlin, Germany*

# Building Unity

## I. Introduction

Take apart something that can be easily put back together again, such as a Christmas tree stand, toy truck, etc. Wrap the individual parts and give one to each person. Ask them to open the gifts one at a time, and then to explain what types of uses there are for each part alone. After the last person has gone, ask them all to put their pieces together and to come up with something that is greater than the individual parts. Ask them what they learned from the exercise.

## II. How do people know that we are Jesus' disciples?

A. Read John 15:8: "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples," and John 13:34-35, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

B. Jesus wants us to love one another and to bear much fruit!

1. Teamwork makes love possible and tangible.
2. "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20).
3. Teamwork is vital to Jesus!

## III. There is strength in unity.

A. Synergy: The sum total is greater than the total of the separate parts—from Greek
*syn*=together;
*ergazomai*=working

B. A team can be far more powerful than the separate members working individually:
2 + 2 can = 5!!

C. Muscles are an example. If the all of the power from all of the muscles in a human body were directed in the same direction, a person could lift 25 tons! That is the power of unity!

D. The leadership groups in the kingdom are very talented groups. God brought these groups together; no one person could have foreseen and planned to bring all of these men and women together to win the world for Christ.

## IV. "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one" (John 17:22).

A. Read John 17:1-26.

B. Jesus prays about unity.

C. The main manifestation of Jesus being one with God is our unity (vs. 11, 21, 22).

D. Our role is to show those around us that Jesus came from God.

E. Our role is to submit our ideas, etc. to the group, with a focus of Christ-like unity.

F. Every cell in the human body is designed for every other cell. The whole purpose of each cell is to enable all the other cells to perform at maximum level. The only cell known to exist for itself is a cancer cell - it eventually destroys all the others!!

G. As a team, we need to learn to follow:

1. Every team has a coach who calls the shots.
2. Every army has a leader who gives the commands.
3. In war, nobody questions the commands! It could cost the life of someone! How do they reach this level of unity? When not in battle, they learn to trust and to follow, thereby training their characters for unity under the pressure of the battle.

## V. Many times, leadership is not about right and wrong.

A. It is about good, better, and best.

B. It is about unity. You may have a better idea, but it is more important to maintain unity and to work together.

C. The Bible teaches that we should obtain advice in all areas of our lives.

1. Why do we not do this?
2. Due to our God-given talents, we have learned to make good/okay decisions with a small margin for error. Bad decisions no longer have such huge consequences. We have become arrogant, thinking we know best, or at least good enough.

## VI. How do we reach unity?

A. Humility

B. Submission (We have to want to overcome our fear of not getting our way.)

## VII. How do we maintain unity?

A. A spirit of teamwork and unity comes from a sacrificial, unconditional love for each other!

B. Remember the cross (Our main motivation must be the cross.)

C. Remember: Jesus is Lord (We all made Jesus the Lord of our lives.)

D. We are a team because of what Jesus has done for us. We are also a team because we are his disciples and he is our Lord. So what remains for us to do is to learn how to love each other.

1. Loving one another is having unconditional love and not pulling back from each other when we are disappointed in our relationships.
2. "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command" (John 15:12-14).
3. Laying down our lives for one another is only possible through our commitment to Jesus and the cross.
4. The following story shows us an example of laying down one's life for others:

In Ernest Gordon's true account of life in a World War II Japanese prison camp, *Through the Valley of the Kwai*, there is a story that never fails to move those who read it. It is about a man who through giving it all away literally transformed a whole camp of soldiers. The man's name was Angus McGillivray.

Angus was a Scottish prisoner in one of the camps filled with Americans, Australians, and Britons who had helped build the infamous Bridge over the river Kwai. The camp had become an ugly situation. A dog-eat-dog mentality had set in. Allies would literally steal from each other and cheat each other; men would sleep on their packs and yet have them stolen from under their heads. Survival was everything. The law of the jungle prevailed. . . .until the news of Angus McGillivray's death spread throughout he camp. Rumors spread in the wake of his death. No one could believe big Angus had succumbed. He was strong, one of those whom they had expected to be the last to die. Actually, it wasn't the fact of his death that shocked the men, but the reason he died. Finally they pieced together the true story.

The Argyles (Scottish soldiers) took their buddy system very seriously. Their buddy was called their "mucker," and these Argyles believed that it was

literally up to each of them to make sure their "mucker" survived. Angus' mucker, though, was dying, and everyone had given up on him, everyone, of course, but Angus. He had made up his mind that his friend would not die. Someone had stolen his mucker's blanket. So Angus gave him his own, telling his mucker that he had "just come across an extra one." Likewise, every mealtime, Angus would get his rations and take them to his friend, stand over him and force him to eat them, again stating that he was able to get "extra food." Angus was going to do anything and everything to see that his buddy got what he needed to recover.

But as Angus' mucker began to recover, Angus collapsed, slumped over, and died. The doctors discovered that he had died of starvation complicated by exhaustion. He had been giving of his own food and shelter. He had given everything he had - even his very life. The ramifications of his acts of love and unselfishness had a startling impact on the compound.

As word circulated of the reason for Angus McGullivray's death, the feel of the camp began to change. Suddenly, men began to focus on their mates, their friends, the humanity of living beyond survival, of giving oneself away. The place was transformed; all because one man gave all he had for his friend. This is the potential unleashed when but one person actually gives it all away.

5. We cannot give it all as a duty; it must be a heart commitment! Giving it all as a life-style cannot be done on our own power. It comes through commitment to Jesus, not our own efforts. Angus got the power to lay his life down. The reason he could do it was the joy he felt in saving his friend.
6. The key to being a mucker is to focus not on what we are losing, but on what others are gaining through our sacrifice!

### VIII. Our unity shows Jesus to the world, because something supernatural is needed to keep so many people united for so long a period of time!

Let's love one another and sacrifice for one another as a team. Let's live lives that are so powerful, so exciting, and so united that the world will see a unity that is only possible because of Jesus Christ!

*Dean Farmer*
*Berlin, Germany*

# 'Teach Us to Pray'

## Introduction

If I asked you to pray for an hour tomorrow, how would you feel? Most of us would be challenged. Part of that is because we are so busy with life that finding sixty precious minutes is difficult. For some of us just the basic discipline necessary to get up early and make the time is hard. However, I am also convinced that for too many it goes beyond discipline to the point where we just do not know how to pray. The thought of conversing with God for a lengthy time is overwhelming. "What would I say?" "This silence is awkward." In Luke 11:1-4 the disciples said five humbling words that were to change their lives and would also change ours: "Lord, teach us to pray."

In Matthew 26:40 Jesus queries the same followers, "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" That question has paradoxically thrilled, challenged and haunted me over the years. Most often the answer in my life has been "No." "I have kids." "I have ministry." "I have responsibilities." One of the most life-changing books I have ever read is *The Hour That Changes the World* by Dick Eastman.* He didn't just inspire me to pray. He practically taught me how. Disciples need inspiration, and they need direction and instruction, too. They will be grateful. Spiritual battles are won in spiritual places. The fight for the world will ultimately be won on our knees. I hope this small outline helps teach our churches to pray. If every disciple prayed for only six minutes on all five areas below, he would move the heavens for thirty minutes. (Of course, twelve minutes each would be an hour!) Further study of these topics will show that all five individually could easily consume an hour.

Let's pray!

**I. Praise -** To praise is vocal adoration of God. It is acknowledging God as God. The old French origin of praise is "prize." Thus we are prizing or estimating the worth of our Father. Praise is unselfish prayer at its finest.

A. Some scriptures
   1. Matthew 6:9 KJV - "To hallow" the Father's name in the Greek means to revere it.
   2. Read through Psalm 22:3; Hebrews 13:15; and Psalm 115:1.

B. Praise him for what?
   1. His name(s): Rock, Fortress, Alpha & Omega, Shield, Defender, Guide, Light, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, etc.
   2. His qualities: Righteous, holy, gracious, powerful, persevering, bold, gentle, etc.
   3. His creation: Sun, moon, stars, animals, trees, mountains, etc.

**2. Confession -** "To confess" is to admit guilt. It is agreeing with God about our sin. It is a heartfelt recognition of who we are. It shows God that we take our sin seriously. A holy God can only use holy vessels. How can he use us in our sin? Initially at baptism, and now in confession afterwards, God forgives our sins and sees us as perfect (1 John 1:9).

A. Some scriptures
   1. 1 Corinthians 6:19 - Just as Jesus cleansed the temple to make it holy, we too must cleanse our bodies to keep them pure.
   2. Read through Psalm 66:18; Psalm 139:23; and Psalm 51.

B. Confess what?
   1. Thoughts; 2. Attitudes; 3. Actions;
   4. Inaction

**3. Intercession -** Intercession is prayer for others. It can literally reach around the world!

A. Some scriptures:

1. Genesis 20:7: "He will pray for you and you will live"
2. Read through 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and Romans 1:9-10.

B. Intercede for whom?

1. Sick; 2. Family; 3. Disciples; 4. Responses to invitation; 5. Lost

**4. Petition -** A petition is a personal request. Most of our prayers are full of these. God wants to know what you want. He is a good Father.

A. Some scriptures

1. James 1:5-8, 4:2: "You do not have because you do not ask." A few years ago, as I was moving to Hartford, Connecticut, Dennis Young came out to Worcester, Massachusetts, to take my place. I had never purchased a lawn mower because I didn't know if we would be in an apartment or home. Because of this I had driven many miles, made many phone calls and gone through extreme hassles to borrow and beg lawn mowers. At one of Dennis' first meetings with the church he said, "I don't have a lawn mower. Could someone help me out?" A brother responded, "I've got two Dennis, you can have one of mine." I almost passed out. It bears repeating: You do not have because you do not ask!
2. Read through 1 Chronicles 4:9-10; James 1:5; Matthew 6:11; and Luke 11:9-13

B. About what?

1. School; 2. Work; 3. Dating/Marriage; 4. Health; 5. Schedule

**5. Thanksgiving -** If praise is acknowledging who God is, then thanksgiving is acknowledging what he has done for us.

A. Some scriptures

1. Mark 8:6 and John 11:41 (and many other passages) show us that Jesus was very thankful even in the middle of a challenging life.
2. Read through Colossians 2:6-7, 4:2; Philippians 4:6.

B. For what?

1. Spiritual blessings: Fruit, closeness, growth, etc.
2. Material blessings: House, car, clothes, etc.
3. Physical blessings: Health
4. External blessings: To other individuals, to the church as a whole, etc.

## Conclusion

There is much that could go into intimate times with God. Singing, meditating, searching the Scriptures, but *never stop praying!* There is much to pray about, and we can change the world through it!

*Jimmy Allen*
*Hartford, Conn., USA*

*Dick Eastman, *The Hour That Changes the World*, (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, Mich., 1978).

# 'Can You Drink the Cup?'

## I. Introduction

A. We like to pray for God to do great things in our lives in areas such as fruit, character changes, leadership roles, etc.

B. If those things don't happen, we say: "Well, I guess God said 'No.'"

C. That is not always the case. Sometimes God does not answer "yes" or "no." Sometimes, God answers our prayers with a question: "Can you drink the cup?"

## II. Matthew 20:20-22

A. The mother of Zebedee's sons basically comes to Jesus in prayer:
   1. She is coming to Jesus (the Son of God) asking for a favor.
   2. She is on her knees.

B. In verse 21, she asks for Jesus to grant her a great request.

C. In verse 22, we see that sometimes we do not know what we are asking. We do not realize what it really takes to:
   1. baptize a disciple!
   2. make a major change in our characters!
   3. motivate and spiritually lead our Bible study groups!
   4. be a spiritual leader in the kingdom of God!

D. "Can you drink the cup of Jesus?"
   1. That is the determining factor we miss sometimes!
   2. Yes, it takes great faith and it takes great prayer, but it also takes great willingness!

## III. The main point is Jesus said that if we want to do great things, then we must be willing to drink the cup!

A. Question: Are we willing? We are attempting something that is so difficult, it has not been done in 17 centuries. (winning the world)

B. Question: Why? Not enough individuals have been willing to pay the price...

C. Question: Will we be any different? (Heaven awaits our reply...)

D. The success or failure of our mission depends on each one of our replies...

## IV. Let's talk about three cups that we must drink if we are to achieve our goals

A. The cup of service (Matthew 20:24-28)
   1. Preach about Jesus.
      a) He served his disciples (teaching, training, washing feet).
      b) He served the lost (healing, feeding, etc.).
   2. That is what it's going to take from us, too:
      a) We need to serve our disciples (our Bible study group) by:
         1) meeting their needs (physical, family, etc.)
         2) discipling their hearts (they must remain in the vine to bear fruit!)
         3) unifying the group (need to mobilize the disciples to serve in areas such as childcare, giving rides, cookies, being a friend, giving gifts and cards, having great talks, and studying the Bible with them!
      b) We need to serve the lost by:
         1) studying with them! (Have a ton of studies!)
         2) praying with them!
         3) having great talks with them! (and the other areas mentioned above)
   3. If we want to do great things, we must be come servants and slaves of all! Are we willing?...

B. The cup of suffering (Matthew 26:36-46)
   1. Preach about Jesus.
   2. What kind of suffering is involved for us?
      a) being righteous (dealing with our own sin, the sin in our groups, and the sin of the lost)
      b) praying and fasting, along with consistent quiet times and extra times with God
      c) working hard (time and effort!)
      d) staying focused (the enemy of the best is the good!)
   3. Hebrews 12:1-6
      a) We give in so easily!
      b) Be holy; disciple your group to be holy. Make holy disciples!
   4. If we want to do great things, we must be willing to suffer! Are we willing?

C. The cup of sacrifice (John 12:20-28)
   1. Preach about Jesus.
   2. The key to making disciples is sacrificial love!
      a) Use the examples of how the people who converted each of us loved us...
      b) Who loved us into the Kingdom? Remember.
      c) We have got to go to our own crosses, and then lead others to theirs! That is how to make disciples!
   3. That is why the world has not been won for Jesus in the last 17 centuries!
      a) It is difficult.
      b) It is like parenting: everyone must make a full sacrifice! (a commitment to be there every time we are needed!)
   4. What does it take to do great things? It takes service, suffering and sacrifice! Are we willing?...

## V. Conclusion:

A. Is it worth it?

B. Imagine the goals (paint a picture) and the people we are praying for.

C. Revelation 12:11
   1. Those that get to heaven think it is worth it...
   2. The world being won for Jesus is worth it!
   3. Yes, it's worth it! (share our own hearts and commitment)

D. Let's do great things for God! Let's be willing to drink the cup!

*Jeff Chacon*
*Orlando, USA*

# The Gospel

## I. Introduction

A. Luke 20:1

1. The term "gospel" in the Bible literally means: "good news."
2. The term "preach" in this context means "to bring or declare."
3. Therefore, to "preach the gospel" means "to bring or declare good news."
4. That's what Jesus spent his time doing: "teaching and bringing people good news."
5. Q: Does that describe your ministry?

B. Luke 4:18-19

1. This passage elaborates on what the "good news" was that Jesus was bringing to people.
   a) "freedom for the prisoners"
   b) "recovery of sight for the blind"
   c) "to release the oppressed"
   d) "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor"
2. Q: Is that what you bring to people? (at midweek? in studies? while evangelizing?)

C. Mark 1:14-15: Since these blessings are only found in the kingdom of God, Mark simply summarizes Jesus' message as "the kingdom of God is near."

D. Luke 9:1-6

1. The disciples of Jesus taught the same message that Jesus did.
2. Of course, they also loved the same way that Jesus loved. That's why they went around healing and helping people.
3. Q: Is that what you go around doing? Does that describe your fellowship?

E. After the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the gospel message had crystallized as follows according to *Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words:*

> "In the New Testament the gospel denotes the good tidings of the Kingdom of God and of salvation through Christ... based (on his) death, ...burial, and ...ascension" (p. 507).

F. So, the gospel message is twofold good news

1. There's *a place* where dreams really do come true! (The Kingdom of God—the church—is it!)
2. There's *a God* who really does love you! In fact, he'd rather die than live without you!
3. Read and preach Ephesians 3:1-12.

## II. A first-century disciple preaches the gospel: read and explain Acts 8:26-40.

A. Now let's re-read vv. 34-35.

B. *Idea:* Let's put ourselves in Philip's shoes.

1. You've been sharing your faith and finally found an open person.
2. You asked him to study the Bible with you and he says Yes!
3. Now, let's fill in the rest of the story from vs. 35: "Then Philip (you) began with that very passage of scripture and told him: (multiple choice)_____."
   a) the *sad news* that he isn't saved?
   b) the *shocking news* that his church is not the right church?
   c) the *depressing news* that all of his efforts have been for naught, and he actually has never been a real disciple?
   d) the *hard-line news* that because he's living in sin he's not going to heaven?

e) the *challenging news* that he must give up everything to be saved?

f) the *disheartening news* that everything he has ever believed or trusted in has been wrong?

g) or the *good news* about Jesus?

4. Personal heart-check questions

a) What are you teaching people in those studies anyway?!

b) Is it good news or bad news?

c) Is it about Jesus or about a commitment to a doctrine or a program?

d) What would Philip have thought of your Bible study if you were leading it and he were sitting in? Would he call it the gospel?

e) What would the Ethiopian Eunuch think of your message? Would he still have responded the way that he did? Or would he have turned it down and you would have called him "unopen"?!

3. Let's look again at the Eunuch's response to Philip's personal Bible study (vv. 36-39).

a) Let me tell you why so many of you don't bring people around, don't seem to find open people and aren't able to baptize: *because your Bible studies are not good news!*

b) When you preach what the first disciples preached, then the people will respond the same way the people in the New Testament did!

c) It's not about a "program" of discipleship! Obviously, discipleship must be taught, but that's not the gospel. Discipleship will be readily accepted by the open person whose heart has been converted by the power of the gospel message (Romans 1:16). Discipleship is the response to the gospel. It is not the gospel.

## III. The gospel message

A. Acts 15:6-11, then 10:34-43

1. The message begins and ends with *peace and forgiveness.* The good news is: Peace through Jesus Christ.

2. God loves you and he's come to your rescue! That's the gospel!

3. Is that what you're teaching people?!

B. Colossians 4:6

1. The gospel is laced through and through with *grace!*

2. Paul didn't say "full of salt, seasoned with grace," but that's how some of us study the Bible with people! No wonder people aren't responding like the Colossians did.

## IV. The gospel must be good news to each of us

A. The *emphasis* on the gospel in our own personal Bible study and life

1. Paul preached the gospel to Christians all the time.

a) Most the major verses we use to preach the gospel to non-Christians were actually written to Christians! (refer to Ephesians 2 and Colossians 1)

b) Read and preach Romans 5:6-11. This is to edify the disciples!

2. Why is it important for us and for our people?

a) Romans 8:31-32: It reassures us of God's love (just like a spouse's love, we need creative reminders daily!).

3. Titus 3:3-8: The gospel motivates us to daily devotion and commitment.
4. 1 John 4:9-11: The gospel teaches and motivates us to love others.

B. The *effect* of the gospel in our lives
1. 1 Corinthians 15:9-11
   a) The real question is: "Has the gospel had effect in *your* life?"
   b) If not, then why not?
2. The gospel always "works," but sometimes it is rejected (or just *partially accepted* - not enough to be saved).
3. Many disciples are *saved* by the cross, but not *motivated, comforted,* and *energized* by it! Why is that?
   a) Because it means that we must accept and admit that we are complete and utter failures at life.
   b) Because it means that we must base our self-esteem on something other than ourselves.
   c) Because it means that we cannot control how we feel anymore by our accomplishments.
   d) Because it means that we have to ask for help and then be indebted for it.
   e) Because it means that we have to be the first to remove our masks.

C. The *role* of the gospel in our lives, in summary
1. It saves us.
2. It sustains us by getting us through trials, challenges, fears—until the end.
3. It feeds us and keeps our spirits buoyed.
4. It motivates us, keeps us moving forward and energizes us. It's the gas that keeps the car going! (us; our people; studies)
5. It motivates us to love others and teaches us how to love—teaches initiation, sacrifice, service, forgiveness, etc.
6. It is administered by us (1 Peter 4:8-10) to the lost—to save them—and to the saved—to sustain, feed, motivate, and teach them.

## V. Conclusion: Acts 20:22-24 (preach and share your heart)

*A Related Quiet Time Study*

### The Importance of the Gospel Message in the Life of the Early Christian Church

#### I. Evangelism

Acts 4:2
Acts 4:33
Acts 5:42
Acts 8:35
Acts 9:20
Acts 10:36-43
Acts 11:20
Acts 13:38
Acts 17:18

#### II. Personal Growth and Discipling

Romans 3:21-25
Romans 5:6-11
Romans 8:31-39
Romans 16:25
1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

1 Corinthians 15:10-11
2 Corinthians 5:18-21
Ephesians 2:1-22
Ephesians 3:1-21
Philippians 2:5-11
Colossians 1:3-23
Titus 3:3-8
1 Peter 1:18-21
1 John 4:9-11,19
Revelation 1:5-6

## III. Challenges

A. Are you as focused on the gospel in your evangelism and in your own life and discipling as the first-century Christians?

B. Maybe that explains why you lack the power that they had. The power is in the gospel message! (1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5).

C. Assignment: Have quiet times on the material above. Teach it to your people. And let's watch the power of God work!

*Jeff Chacon*
*Orlando, USA*

# Motivation

*(A study to be used with Christians and non-Christians)*

## I. How eager are you to grow spiritually?

(make changes, live by the Bible) Let's look at Jesus' attitude about "going after it" spiritually and "getting serious" about God:

A. Make every effort (Luke 13:22-31).

1. Verse 23—This man asked an important question. Why do you think he asked it? Perhaps:
   a) He was really concerned about his own situation.
   b) He had heard Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and wanted clarification: "But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:14).
   c) He had heard how challenging Jesus was and how high his standards were. (Luke 9:23-26)
2. How did Jesus respond to the question?
   a) "Don't worry. God is all-loving—just believe"?
   b) "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere"?
   c) "All religions are basically the same—just be a good person"?
3. Jesus said in Luke 13:24 to "...make every effort to enter through the narrow door."

B. The phrase "make every effort" is translated from a strong Greek word: *agonizomai*—"to fight, violently struggle, agonize, labor fervently"

1. What does this mean practically? What is someone like who is *agonizomai* spiritually?
   a) Reading the word daily (Psalm 119:9-16)
   b) Praying fervently (Colossians 4:12)
   c) Serving and sacrificing (Matthew 20:26-28)
   d) Attending church services (Hebrews 10:24-25)
   e) Preaching the word and making disciples (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)
2. Isn't there an easier alternative to *agonizomai*?
   a) Luke 13:24: "many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to."
   b) The word "try" is translated from the Greek word: "*zeteo*"—"to desire, endeavor, inquire, seek after"
   c) It's true many religious people desire to go to heaven and seek after God in varying degrees. What is someone like who is *zeteo* spiritually?
   d) You can be comfortable and be *zeteo*. You can set your own standards and be *zeteo*. You can be sincere and a "good person" in the world's eyes and be *zeteo*. You can go to church, tithe, and read your Bible and still be *zeteo*.
3. Would Jesus describe you as *agonizomai* or *zeteo*?

## II. Be hot! (Revelation 3:14-20)

A. This is a letter written to Christians in Laodicea.

1. Verse 15—Jesus knows our deeds, our true spiritual condition.
2. Verse 16—These Christians had cooled off and had become lukewarm spiritually.
3. There are three possible spiritual conditions to describe each of us—hot, cold, or lukewarm.

B. How would you describe someone who is "cold" spiritually?
   1. Unbeliever
   2. Against Christianity
   3. Hateful

C. How would you describe someone who is "hot" spiritually?
   1. Fervent faith and sense of purpose (2 Corinthians 5:13-15)
   2. Sacrificial (Romans 12:1)
   3. Loving and serving (1 John 4:7-8)
   4. Preaching the gospel and making disciples (Luke 4:43-44)
   5. Striving for purity (2 Corinthians 7:1)
   6. Persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12)

D. How would you describe someone who is "lukewarm" spiritually? (Share times from your life when you have been lukewarm.)
   1. Religious believer, yet selfish: "my schedule," "my priorities," "my life"
   2. Concerned with comfort
   3. Cowardly—not boldly making disciples
   4. Self-focused—not mission-focused
   5. Worse yet—deceived—thinking everything's okay. Revelation 3:17—"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked."

E. How does it make Jesus feel to see spiritual lukewarmness?
   1. Verse 16—Nauseated—Imagine drinking a glass of lukewarm mustard water. Imagine smelling a horrible smell and seeing a hideous sight. How does it make you feel?
   2. This is how lukewarmness makes Jesus feel. When we are lukewarm, we make the Savior nauseated.

F. Honestly, how would Jesus describe you—hot, lukewarm, or cold?
   1. Jesus offers help for the lukewarm. (verses 17-20)
   2. We must admit our true condition.

G. Decide to repent and get serious.
   1. What do you need to do to get hot in your devotion to God?
   2. Devotion to the church?
   3. Devotion to the mission?

Let's make a plan together and inspire each other to be hot!

*Roy Larson*
*Boston, USA*

# PART 4

# Deeper Study

# The Biblical Role of Elders

*by Gordon Ferguson—Boston, USA*

## I. Biblical Terms Describing Elders

A. Elder (Greek: *presbuteros*)
   1. An older person (See 1 Timothy 5:1 and 1 Peter 5:5 where the word is used simply to denote a person of greater age.)
   2. Who is older? While the answer would be somewhat relative based on life expectancy in a given culture and on the make-up of the group in which the person was found, it is interesting to note that Timothy was considered youthful by Paul (1 Timothy 4:12). Assuming that he was at least 20 when Paul first met him (Acts 16:1ff), he would likely have been in his mid-30s when Paul wrote 1 Timothy.
   3. Therefore, the elder was an older person who could use his wisdom gained by experience to provide security and direction to the flock of God.

B. Shepherd (Greek: *poimen*)
   1. Translated "pastors" in Ephesians 4:11
   2. The shepherd had two primary functions: to lead the flock in the way it should go and to watch over the flock to keep any from straying or getting lost.

C. Overseer (Greek: *episcopos*)
   1. Translated "bishop" in the older versions
   2. The verb form of the word is seen in Mat thew 25:36, emphasis added, ("I was sick and you *looked after* me") and in James 1:27, emphasis added, ("*to look after* orphans and widows in their distress").
   3. To be an "overseer" involves an examination of, and providing for, a person's needs.

## II. Biblical Qualifications for Elders

A. Primary passages
   1. 1 Timothy 3:1-7
   2. Titus 1:5-9

B. General categories: (allowing for some obvious overlapping)
   1. Personality and character qualities
      a. Temperate
      b. Self-controlled
      c. Hospitable
      d. Disciplined
      e. Not violent, but gentle
      f. Not quarrelsome
      g. Not overbearing
      h. Not quick-tempered
   2. Spiritual qualities
      a. Not a recent convert
      b. Loves what is good
      c. Holy
      d. Upright
   3. Reputation
      a. Good reputation with outsiders (or may fall into disgrace)
      b. Respectable
      c. Above reproach
      d. Blameless
      e. Not given to drunkenness
      f. Not a lover of money
      g. Not pursuing dishonest gain
   4. Teaching skills
      a. Able to teach
      b. Holds firmly to the trustworthy message (thus able to encourage others by sound doctrine and to refute those who oppose it)

5. Leadership skills (as demonstrated by his family—he must be able to *manage* his own family well if he is *to take care of* God's family [1 Timothy 3:5])
   a. Husband of but one wife
   b. Manages his own family well
   c. Sees that his children obey him with proper respect
   d. His children believe, and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient

C. Therefore, the biblical qualifications dictate that the elder be an older, experienced, spiritual brother with children who are disciples. Further, he must be a reputable man even among outsiders, and one who clearly possesses an ability to lead the way and to effectively teach others to do the same.

## III. Biblical References to Elders

A. Acts 11:29-30
B. Acts 14:23
C. Acts 15:1-2
D. Acts 15:4-6
E. Acts 15:22-23
F. Acts 16:4
G. Acts 20:17
H. Acts 21:18
I. Philippians 1:1
J. 1 Timothy 4:14

## IV. Biblical Directives to and about Elders

A. Acts 20:28
B. Ephesians 4:11-13
   1. The grammatical structure of v. 11 makes "pastors" and "teachers" the same office or role; hence, the *pastor/teacher.*
   2. Along with the other offices mentioned, the pastor/teacher is to be in a training and equipping role for the church.

C. 1 Timothy 5:17-20
   1. Elders are to direct the affairs of the church—this statement would mean that these men would be as involved in directing the church as the evangelists were.
   2. Those whose work included preaching and teaching would most likely be recognized as evangelists as well, although all elders are to be *pastor/teachers.*
   3. The double honor, in context, seems clearly to refer to financial support.
   4. The evangelist is here given the responsibility to consider charges against an elder and to rebuke those who sin.

D. James 5:14
E. 1 Peter 5:1-4
   1. The flock is "under the care" of the elders, since they serve as *overseers.*
   2. Their leadership role focuses on their example to the flock and not on simply positional authority (Matthew 20:25-28).

F. Two special passages in that they do not mention elders specifically, but clearly include them because of the content
   1. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
   2. Hebrews 13:17

## Issues for Discussion

1. In regard to the prominence of the role of the elders: Just how did they fit into the decision-making process? Even with the apostles present, the elders were very conspicuous in the overall

leadership of the Jerusalem church and in the decisions made for the movement of God. It seems pretty clear that we are different in our present structure. Are the differences warranted, and if so, on what basis?

2. The teaching/preaching role of elders: What were the variations? Were those in 1 Timothy 5 elder/evangelists as we designate them, or was their teaching and preaching more focused on training and strengthening the flock?

3. If we were to drop all preconceived ideas about the elder's role, what would be the most optimum use of his age/experience/wisdom in the flock he shepherds?

# Practicing Hospitality–Restorers of the Lost Art

*Sheila Jones*
*Boston, USA*

Many people have a difficult time relating to the word "hospitality." To Generation Xers it conjures up pictures of prim and proper fifty-something ladies in white gloves eating finger sandwiches and petits fours—accompanied by classical music and inane conversation. Many, if not most, have a skewed view of hospitality and feel awkward in their attempts to practice it. Some grew up in homes where their parents rarely, if ever, invited non-relatives to eat a meal. Others watched from a safe distance as their mothers fretted and fumed over a meal as if their total worth as a person depended upon the impression made on the guests that evening. Still others remember fathers who were anything but enthusiastic that they would be required to leave the TV set, and accompanying TV tray, to sit at the table and talk to people they didn't know and didn't *care* to know.

The Scriptures are clear. We are commanded to "practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13). For those of us who are followers of Jesus and of his Word, we must know what hospitality is so we can be obedient and *practice* it. The Jewish people in biblical times placed the highest priority upon being hospitable to others—especially strangers. During feast time, homes in Jerusalem and surrounding towns were opened to pilgrims coming to the Holy City to worship at the temple. There were no Holiday Inns, no McDonald's, no RV camps with electricity hookups and hot showers. They relied upon each other for food and shelter when they were away from home.

## Hospitality: A Definition

Hospitality, simply defined, is sharing your heart and your home with others. A truly hospitable person is a giver, a person with a servant heart. He or she is sensitive to the needs of others and is willing and eager to expend energy, time and money to meet those needs. With this heart, they welcome others into a home in which they already show hospitality to their own family. Hospitality is not necessarily elegant entertaining; it is not rising to the occasion to put on a good show; it is not a cloak to dress up in and take off after guests leave. It is a reflection of the very heart of God to others.

## Practicing Hospitality

In order to be encouraging and effective in our hospitality, we must first be content in the situations (houses or apartments) God has given us. We must have order and consistency in cleaning and decorating our houses, so we can reflect the nature and beauty of God's character.

We have to realize, though, that we can have a beautiful house and well-organized approaches to maintaining it, yet miss the whole meaning of "home" as God intended it. Home is the heart of hospitality. Building warmth and trust within your own family is essential to inviting others to join you as family. Home should be a safe harbor for children and guests alike. Even if you live in a singles' household (or by yourself), you can and must foster a sense of home and family.

After setting your house in order and establishing family in your home, you are ready to learn more about the meaning and practice of hospitality itself. Sharing your food and home with those who are not disciples is one of the best ways to show them your heart and life; it is also one of the best ways to encourage those who are already dis-

ciples. Peter says to disciples, "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling" (1 Peter 4:9). There is something disarming and vulnerable about inviting others into your home. As you show hospitality, they will see the love of God.

## God's Word in the Matter

*Kay McKean*
*Boston, USA*

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The first words of the Bible describe for us how God took nothing, and out of that nothing he created something: a home for mankind. Our home, planet Earth, was created by God to become an environment that would be beautiful for his people, that would sustain them so that they could live and work and raise families, and so that they could glorify and worship God.

The first ones to be given this home were Adam and Eve. God commanded them to live in their home, the Garden of Eden, and also to do the work that God gave them to do: to give names to all the creatures that God had created. Other players in God's drama were also given homes. Noah's home was the ark, where he was to be host, not only to human beings, but also to animals so that they would be protected from the flood. Abraham's traveling home was a tent, from which he entertained heavenly visitors. The Israelites were given a home, a land of their own, where centuries later, the Messiah would be born. Whatever the location or type of dwelling, homes were always intended to be a place from which the work of God would be accomplished.

### God Blesses Hospitality

The home was also a means through which God could bless his people. After Abraham's hospitality toward his three visitors, he was promised a son. Lot's home was opened to angels who ultimately secured his escape from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Rebekah invited Abraham's servant to her family's home, and got a husband in the bargain! The widow of Zarephath provided housing for Elijah, and survived a famine because of it. A Shunammite woman built a room onto her house for Elisha, and was blessed with a son. Esther prepared a palace feast, and saved her people from destruction.

As history marched forward to the time of Christ, we see that God was still using homes to bring him glory, regardless of the type of dwelling they might have been. God took a shelter for animals, and made it into the birthplace of the Savior of the world. The homes of "sinners" and "tax collectors" became catalysts for repentance and beacons of hope. God used the homes of Jews and Gentiles, men and women, jailers and prominent citizens to advance his kingdom following the days of Pentecost.

Our Father continues to use homes as places where the saved can be refreshed and the good news can be preached to the lost. Bible studies, church services and reviving devotionals have been presented in living rooms, dormitory rooms and kitchens across the world. Whatever the dwelling may be (a boat, a cave, a hut, a tent, a cottage, a palace or a suburban ranch with two-car garage) God can use it to further his cause, *if* the inhabitants are surrendered to doing his will.

### Drawing Close to God

Jesus and his followers demonstrate the incredible blessings that can occur when the home is

used as a place to draw closer to God. Jesus himself did not have a home to call his own, as he reminds us in Matthew 8:20, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." However, this did not stop him from showing the blessings of hospitality, even if it was in another person's home! Each time Jesus was invited, or invited himself, into someone's home, the residents were able to either receive or to witness healing, salvation, and the very words of life. Think on the numerous examples of this: Zaccheus the tax collector radically repented following a meal in his home with Jesus (Luke 19:5-8); a lesson on love and forgiveness was delivered and exhibited in a Pharisee's home (Luke 7:36-50); a visit to Martha's home led to a reminder of what was truly best and most important (Luke 10:38-42); Jesus' anointing and his commendation of a woman's love took place during a meal at Simon's home (Mark 14:3-9); a paralytic was forgiven and healed after he and his friends "crashed" a gathering in Capernaum (Mark 2:1-12); Jesus sent out the mission team of seventy-two, telling them to enter homes and to eat and drink what they were given (Matthew 10:7). These are only a few of the instances where the home is mentioned as the venue for the work of God. Surely God is deliberately showing us the incredible ways that he can be glorified through the opening of homes.

## The Early Church

In the infancy of the church, it is not surprising to see the early disciples walking the same path of hospitality and thereby advancing the kingdom in so many ways. The church was meeting together daily as they "broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:46). The ministry to the Gentiles began in Cornelius' home (Acts 10:25ff). A prayer group meeting at Mary's house received Peter after his miraculous escape from prison (Acts 12:12). Paul's ministry in Philippi was headquartered in the home of Lydia, his first convert there (Acts 13-15). The Philippian jailer prepared a meal for Paul and Silas in his home following his baptism (Acts 16:31-34). Priscilla and Aquila were hosts to Paul in Corinth, and later to Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18:3, 26). The recorded *Acts of the Apostles* closes out with the message of hospitality: "For two whole years Paul stayed there *in his own rented house* and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 18:30-31, emphasis added).

The letters to the early Christians show the importance and necessity of homes being used to serve God. The church met at the home of Priscilla and Aquila in Rome (Romans 16:5) and in the home of Nympha in Colosse (Colossians 4:15). Paul and the whole church enjoyed the hospitality of Gaius (Romans 16:23). Paul asked Philemon to welcome Onesimus, and also to prepare a guest room for himself (Philemon 17:22). The Bible makes it clear that Christian hospitality was vital to the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church!

## Commands and Examples

The term "cocooning" has been used recently to indicate the isolating of a person or family in order to survive these uncertain and tumultuous times. It is understandable to want to lock our doors, pull down the shades and keep to ourselves for safety and security. But when we have an "us four no more" mentality, not only do we deny others a chance to have their needs met, we also deny

ourselves the opportunity to enjoy the blessings of sharing with others. Romans 12:13 is not just a suggestion, but a command from God for us to fulfill his purpose for our lives: "Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

*Unconditional.* Hospitality is not limited to inviting into our homes people who are just like us. Jesus condemned this action in Luke 14:13: "When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed." Many people open their homes only to people with whom they feel naturally comfortable. Clearly the directive is to open our homes to all types of people in order to serve and share with them all. In this way, we have the added benefit of learning about people from all walks of life: We are able to learn from people of different races, cultures and backgrounds.

*Unselfish.* Hospitality is not a means to popularity or selfish gain, as Jesus goes on to say in Luke 14:14, "Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." We see that Jesus' idea of hospitality is not simply to entertain, to impress, to get a promotion or to get ahead, but to *give*. Any other attitude will not bring about the blessings that God has promised.

*Compassionate.* One of the greatest aspects of hospitality is having the opportunity to meet the needs of others. In Matthew 25: 31-45, we learn that as we feed, clothe, visit, look after and invite in others, it is as if we are doing so for Jesus himself! Our hospitality cannot be a self-serving agenda, designed to make ourselves feel good, but rather, a way to learn how to understand, serve and love other people.

*Joyful.* A very specific reminder is given to us in 1 Peter 4:9: "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." It is ludicrous to consider the possibility of having someone into your home and expecting them to feel comfortable if you are muttering and scowling, reminding them of how much trouble it is! While few would actually go that far, guests can sense tension, anxiety and exasperation, even if we are trying to hide it. On the contrary, our visitors should sense our thankfulness and joy that they have come to visit us!

*Quality.* The wedding at Cana gave Jesus the opportunity to serve by turning water into wine. This wasn't just watery wine, but was, as we see in John 2:10, "the best wine." God's habit of always giving the best is the example we must follow as we are serving others in our homes. Throughout Scripture we see that hospitality was not displayed in a sloppy, uncaring way, but with great attention and care. What a wonderful opportunity for us to deny ourselves and give the best we have for the benefit of others.

*Prepared.* Perhaps one of the most encouraging passages in the Bible is Jesus' statement, found in John 14:2, that he would go and "prepare a place" for us in his Father's house. To be hospitable does require some planning and effort. Although our homes should be open at all times to others, there is a need for disciples to work and prepare for guests who are expected. Waiting until the last moment to receive people into our homes indicates a lack of concern and respect. When we know guests are coming, we should do all we can to let them know we have looked forward to their arrival and have done all we can do to make them feel welcome.

## Following the Example

God's kingdom must advance, and we as 20th-century disciples will have a great hand in that advancement as we obey the command to be hospitable. As I read in the Bible of souls being saved through hospitality, I am reminded of so many

stories of conversions in recent years that began with the question, "Would you like to come to my home?" As those in our modern world become more and more isolated from one another, we are exhorted to be different and to open our homes to the lost and to the saved.

Hospitality may come naturally to some people, while others have to work at it more. We can all be encouraged and challenged by men and women who have left their own familiar culture and country and have learned how to be hospitable in a foreign land, often in a foreign language. Missionaries around the world must learn how to make a home in an unfamiliar environment and use that home to further the kingdom of God. I am personally inspired by the women who have learned new ways to shop, cook, serve and speak so that that they can help others know God. These are great examples to us of modern day hospitality, and we must strive to imitate their hearts and their actions.

### The Host with the Most

God is our ultimate example of hospitality. He has provided a home for us on this earth, a place to live and work and do his will. He has welcomed us into his kingdom and provided us with a sustaining environment, the church. The church, the people of God, is like a home. It provides security; it is a haven, a safe place. It is not a place to hide, but rather, supplies the courage to go out into the world and help others. The head of this "home" is Jesus himself, and he leads his family to incredible blessings.

Finally, God protects us in the church until we go to be with him forever in our eternal home. The scriptures that describe heaven for us speak of feasts and banquets, of weddings, of beautiful places, of joy, of celebration—all the things that are considered lovely in this world. I believe that God knows we can't fathom how wonderful heaven will be, but he gives us enough clues to know that it will be awesome! What is even better is that God will be there to welcome us! To give us the privilege to go to heaven is the greatest act of hospitality we will ever experience!

## Real Men Are Hospitable

*Ron Brumley*
*Seattle, USA*

The majority of men tend to leave hospitality up to the women. These are some of the same men who believe in 1 Timothy 3:2 and in Titus 1:8 that says "...the overseer must be...hospitable...." This quality of character that elders are to exhibit, is addressed to the elder—not the wives of elders. This truth must attract our attention, men, and elicit our obedience.

Certainly, some men are more blessed with the gift of serving, which includes being hospitable. But as with most gifts from God, the exercise of them brings about growth and maturity. It is my firm conviction that all male disciples can and need to grow in the gift of serving—of being hospitable as we reach out and influence the disparate world in which we live. For elders, and those who have their hearts set on being an elder, God says we must be hospitable. So men, let's read and study and grow in our hospitality. It's definitely a subject *not for women only.*

To start with, a good working definition of hospitality is having the heart and making the effort to meet the needs of other people, both family and strangers. Our focus here is the expression of hospitality as practiced in our homes. All people have

the need to feel warmly loved and included. All of us have the need to feel enjoyed, appreciated and included into a family. Our homes, apartments, town houses, condos and all our belongings are gifts to us from our generous and loving heavenly Father, who intends for us to use them to further his purposes. All the wonderful blessings and gifts we receive from God can be either a tremendous asset in our expression of hospitality or a huge stumbling block as we consume ourselves in fulfilling our own pleasures and comforts.

Hospitality goes beyond the courtesy of rising and greeting people as they enter our home (though important). It goes beyond preparing and sharing a meal with others (though important). Hospitality is about communicating in a variety of ways the great lengths we have gone to in order to make the time with our guests special for them—that we've organized everything and set the tone and atmosphere with them in mind. By our interest in them and our conversation that draws them out, they clearly sense that they are our focus for the evening.

# Religious or Righteous?

*Fred Faller—Boston, USA*

> *"For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."*
>
> Matthew 5:20

What do you think of when you hear the word "righteousness"? About a year ago I was challenged about my understanding of the nature of righteousness in the Bible and in my daily living. J.P. Tynes introduced the idea in a class that the word I used for "righteousness" in the Old Testament carries a deeply embedded cultural concept. The challenge was that this concept was more tied to the fulfillment of the relationship between two persons than to the fulfillment of a legalistic code. Thinking like an Old Testament Jew, even two thieves could be considered "righteous" in their relationship to one another if it were characterized by sharing, fairness, camaraderie and loyalty.

This was an intriguing thought that shook the foundation of the absolute righteousness that I had always cast upon God's nature and law. Furthermore, it occurred to me that understanding this concept fully could transform the way we see ourselves as Christians and the importance of relationships in our daily lives.

I set about to investigate this curiosity for myself and what I found has done more to revolutionize my own concept of God and the church than any other single understanding about the Bible.

## Righteousness in the Old Testament

As I more carefully researched this idea to see if it had validity, the results were startling. Of the theological dictionaries of the Old Testament all six contained a discussion of "righteousness" in the terms described above. I have included here an excerpt from one of these references because it states the case more succinctly than I could in my own words:

> "Righteousness," as it is understood in the OT, is a thoroughly Hebraic concept, foreign to the Western mind and at variance with the common understanding of the term. The failure to comprehend its meaning is perhaps most responsible for the view of the OT religion as 'legalistic' and as far removed from the graciousness of the NT.
>
> Rather, "righteousness" is, in the Old Testament, the fulfillment of the demands of a relationship, whether that relationship be with men or with God. Each man is set within a multitude of relationships: king with people, judge with complainants, priests with worshipers, common man with family, tribesman with community, community with resident alien and poor, all with God. And each of these relationships brings with it specific demands, the fulfillment of which constitutes righteousness. ("Righteousness" by E. R. Achtemeier in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Abingdon Press 1962, volume 4, pp. 80-85).

This idea can be seen in passages like Psalm 40:10 where David says, "I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation." God's righteousness is equated with his faithfulness in relationships and his saving or rescuing of those he loves. In Psalm 65 we see that God answers "with awesome deeds of righteousness" by forgiving those overwhelmed with

sins and filling them with the good things from his house. In Psalm 103:6 God's righteousness means his commitment to the oppressed. Righteousness is clearly not being used to mean that God obeys some abstract moral code but that he is faithful in relationships.

Isaiah 32:1-2 envisions the coming Kingdom of God as one in which "a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice," and where

*each man will be like a shelter*
*from the wind*
*and a refuge from the storm,*
*like streams of water in the desert*
*and the shadow of a great rock*
*in a thirsty land."*

The Kingdom of Righteousness is one where the king will be committed to his relationships with his people, where leaders under him will have this same heart, and where all the people will be faithful to the care and protection of one another.

## Jesus and Righteousness

Jesus lived out this kind of righteousness with a passion that confounded many of the people around him. While the Pharisees were muttering about the character of the woman who was washing Jesus' feet with perfume, Jesus was caring about her—thus meeting the simple demands of the relationship. When Zaccheus climbed the tree just to get a glimpse of Jesus, Jesus met that anticipation by having lunch with the man and his family while the Jews stood outside and pondered Jesus' poor choice of friends. He initiated with the woman at the well, while the disciples could not figure out why he would be talking to a woman. Jesus stopped amid the throng to meet the need of the bleeding woman when she cried out for attention by simply touching his garment. Jesus saw that right relationships were the key to righteousness, rather than legalistically and dutifully acting out some prescribed behavior.

## Relationship with God

Throughout eternity, it has been God's plan to establish and keep a relationship with man. God has expectations of us to fulfill the other side of that relationship. Isaiah 59:1-2 simply states that God has always done his part and that it is our sin, our failing, that severs the relationship. Our righteousness before God is simply based on fulfilling the demands of the relationship that he desires to have with us. This righteousness demonstrates so clearly the failure of a "works" mentality in Christianity. Prayer is not a time to accomplish your list of things to get done with God's help, but it is time with God, fulfilling the relationship he desires to have with you. The righteousness of prayer is not a daily duty or task before God or because God will not work if we do not pray; it is part of our relationship. If we do not communicate, we cannot work together. All the good works we could list that are void of relationship can no longer be considered righteous. It is the relationship that will ultimately be the test on Judgment Day.

Many people who appeared to work hard in serving God, people who may have even done miracles and exorcisms, will stand before Jesus describing their lives of service but Jesus will say to them, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers" (Matthew 7:21-23). This is reflected in Matthew 25 when the sheep and the goats are separated for eternity. The concluding judgment is that "they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life" (Matthew 25:46).

The Apostle Paul, in struggling to advance his relationship with God, compares his legalistic tradition in Judaism with the surpassing value of knowing Christ. He continues,

> *I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*
>
> (Philippians 3:8-9)

This statement about righteousness is not just sandwiched between two very pointed statements of Paul's desire to know Christ; it is in fact all one thought: that Paul's greatest pursuit was to have a right relationship to God, the essence of righteousness before God. That righteousness is something that God has initiated in spite of us (1 John 4:9-11). Our response and only hope is faith in God's promise and way of making us righteous through the cross (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Ephesians 2:17-18).

## Righteousness of Christian Relationships

The sin that stands between brothers who are striving to be righteous is an affront to God that is heartily condemned throughout the Bible. Think of all the passages about sin in the New Testament, and see how many of them are set in the context of the failure to meet the needs of a relationship. These relationships are always cast in the presence of God and are associated with our fulfillment of that relationship as well. The "one another" passages do not constitute a "list of scriptures" that tell us how we ought to be. They represent the struggle of God through his Word to accurately represent the nature of righteousness. Whatever action or thought that breaks down a relationship or destroys unity is simply unrighteous. That which builds up and promotes unity is righteous.

Whether we are righteous as we eat meat previously sacrificed to idols, drink wine with dinner, talk with a third person about conflict with another, etc., has little to do with the action itself, but with whether relationships are built or destroyed as a result of our action. Even the absolutes of sexual immorality, lying, stealing, murder and the like, are not isolated activities that God has capriciously defined as sins. They are actions that destroy relationships with others and with God himself. They are simply unrighteous in the purest sense. "Those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21). God is opposed to adultery, homosexuality, pornography and premarital sex, not because he dislikes us or is trying to deprive us, but because sin destroys relationships, and we can have a fatal attraction to it.

## Priorities in Relationships

There will be times when the demands of one relationship come in conflict with the demands of another. Certainly, there is one relationship that always must have the priority: our relationship with God. The righteous choice is always the one which puts our relationship with God first. We cannot interact righteously with another person if we put that person before God, even though they may want to make that demand on us (Matthew 10:37-38). "Seek first the kingdom of heaven and *his righteousness*" (Matthew 6:33, emphasis added). Our unity with God is always the first priority, even if it means sacrificing another relationship. Do not be fooled; we are never righteous in our relationship with someone if we love them more than God, or sin with them to keep the relationship.

## Impossibility of 'Self-Righteousness'

True righteousness can never be self-generated or self-perpetuated. The man who strives with all his might to be "righteous," i.e. doing all the right things, while ignoring or looking down on others cannot be righteous. Just as our righteousness with God is totally dependent on his gracious forgiveness of the sins that separate us from him, so is our righteousness with other people. For example, Paul, as we saw earlier in Philippians 3:9, earnestly desired that it not be "a righteousness of my own that comes from law, but that which is through faith in Christ Jesus—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith." In Romans 3:20, Paul further states that "no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law." We must understand that whatever righteousness we have is only because we are forgiven sons and daughters, by faith, and this is a gift of God, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our righteousness with others requires the same forgiveness and grace and faith. We must "settle matters quickly" and "not let the sun go down on our anger." We must have the righteousness of God by being more interested in sustaining the relationship than executing justice due. Thus, "self-righteousness" is really a contradiction in terms.

## Righteousness of the Church

In Isaiah 9:7, the prophecy of Jesus states that he will establish and uphold his kingdom with justice and righteousness. Right relationships are the building blocks of a great church. This is perhaps one of the greatest discoveries of the "multiplying ministries" and their worldwide impact. It also divulges the greatest failure of many churches that have taught the right doctrine but were not serious about the relationships that establish and uphold the kingdom. We are not and cannot be autonomous or independent as part of the kingdom of God. The demands of true righteousness form the "joints and ligaments," the relationships, that hold the various parts of the church together. Righteousness sustains the very purpose and meaning of the church as the community of saved people who serve as the light to the world and the salt of the earth.

## Righteousness of Evangelism

In light of the true definition of righteousness, evangelism can no longer be "one of the things that God expects me to do." It actually is fulfilling the demands of the relationships that surround us every day. God's eternal plan has been to reconcile people to himself and unite people where sin has divided them. (Read Ephesians and 2 Corinthians 5.) The encounters we have daily with many people, no matter how prolonged or how brief, are relationships that set demands on us for our example, our patience, love, consideration, kindness, etc. When we meet these demands, we are righteous. When we fail, we are unrighteous. Also, when sin is not forgiven, there is always a barrier to a relationship. We know that no relationship can be complete and unified while sin remains on either side. Thus, the fulfillment of the demands of every relationship we have is eventually the repentance that leads to forgiveness from God and from each other. Only then can the unity and harmony between two people be complete. Attempting to fulfill this need in the relationships that surround us is evangelism in its purest form. It cannot be relegated only to a scheduled activity but must rather be a comprehensive passion to see all relationships restored completely according to God's plan. The righteousness of God manifested itself in his striving to do all he could to

bring us back to him without compromising truth and the nature of God. Righteousness for us must have his one focus: striving to do everything we can to bring others to a right relationship with God without compromising.

## Call to Righteousness

Each of us must seriously reflect on the depths and importance of biblical righteousness in our lives. We must begin to live out this concept with the passion of Jesus, never compromising its purity for our own selfish ambitions or pride. When the objective of our lives is right relationships with God and with all men with all the force that God has given in the Bible, we, as a movement, will continue to see growth, not only in the number of people who are brought into the kingdom, but in the quality of the fabric of the kingdom itself.

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# The Relationship of Grace, Law and Love

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## A Brief Outline

I. Introduction: The Basic Problem
II. A Historical Perspective: Various Schools of Thought on the Covenants
III. The Reality of Old Testament Salvation
IV. The Means of Salvation Under Moses
V. First-Century Misconceptions
VI. A Twentieth-Century Misconception
VII. Conclusion

## Introduction

The precise correlation of grace to the old covenant, law to the new covenant, and both covenants to each other is an intricate problem for students of the Bible. The basic difficulty is linked to a proper understanding of the nature of the Mosaic covenant and the salvation offered to its subjects. The New Testament is explicit concerning the requirements of justification for all who have lived after the death of Christ. This same revelation, however, does not systematically develop the specific details involved in Old Testament justification. The burden of the New Testament writers was to persuade persons that the Mosaic system had completed its task historically and no longer provided a valid means of approaching God.

This fact accounts for the New Testament emphasis on the negative aspects of the Law. Those men who insisted on clinging to the Law after its nullification had to be shown the fallacy of their position. This emphasis, though highly necessary in the first century, has presented later students with the possibility of misunderstanding the overall nature and purpose of the Law in God's outworking of redemption. Many have concluded that the Mosaic system was purely legal in its very nature. If this position were correct, it would seem to necessitate the view that all who lived under the Law were lost spiritually.

Without a proper concept of justification in the Old Testament, we simply cannot understand the law-grace question. A misconception of the salvation offered during this time will distort attitudes toward both covenants. For this reason, many students of the Bible have developed a negative view of the Law, and subsequently, of the legal aspects of Christ's teaching. Such tendencies militate against the unity of Scripture and implicitly impugn the nature of God. Therefore, the unifying principles of the two covenants must be stressed to provide a proper foundation for understanding their contrasts.

## An Historical Perspective

At the outset, it will prove helpful to consider the historical struggle of several groups within the Christian religion as they dealt with the covenant problem. Martin Luther had a rather unique view of the testaments. Most before him conceived of the Law and Gospel as the Old and New Testaments, or as many termed it, the old and new laws. With Luther, the distinction concerned principles rather than covenants. He felt that the Law was negative, while the Gospel was positive. Thus, much Gospel could be found in the Old Testament and much Law in the New. The determining factor was whether a command or a promise was involved. Luther had no patience with anyone who would portray Christ as a lawgiver. His concepts of Law and grace, although novel, obviously neglect the historical development of the covenants in a time sequence.

The "Reformed theologians," also called "Covenant theologians" because of their interests in

this direction, have formulated quite a different scheme. According to their major Confessions of Faith, the whole of biblical revelation can be viewed as two covenants, one of works and the other of grace. The covenant of works was given to Adam, and was violated by the intrusion of sin. God then had the alternative of destroying man or intervening with a covenant of grace. He chose the latter, a fact first demonstrated in Genesis 3:15. Thus construed, the Mosaic and Christian covenants are but different aspects of the one covenant of grace. These differ in requirements, but are both reflective of one plan of salvation based on the mercy of God, extended on the ground of the cross, and accepted by faith.

Reformed theology is definitely superior to Lutheranism in the consideration of the Old Testament as a part of salvation history. An honest attempt was made in dealing with the doctrine of redemption for those who lived in the Mosaic era. The gracious nature of God was harmonized with his treatment of man from the beginning. The Mosaic Law was not only studied as a separate entity, but its positive elements and valuable contributions were noted.

In spite of its positive aspects, however, Covenant theology is not without its problems and shortcomings. The real distinctions between the covenants are not often dealt with adequately. Further, the inferior aspects of the Law are not honestly treated. The result is that New Testament institutions lose their distinctive nature, as the New Testament is read back into the Old.

Another view of the covenants is set forth by "Dispensational theology." This system of interpretation, promulgated largely through the Scofield Reference Bible and the Dallas Theological Seminary, is emphatic in its distinct treatment of religious history. Scofield discovered seven periods, or dispensations, in Scripture, culminating in the Millennial Reign of Christ on earth. Each of the dispensations is rather independent, but a sharp dichotomy exists between the Jewish and Christian. The result of this distinction is a very legalistic concept of the Mosaic legislation. Dispensationalists often call the Law a meritorious system and a covenant of works. According to Scofield, the Israelites at Sinai should have humbly pleaded for a continued relation of grace rather than presumptuously accepting the Law.[1]

The seemingly necessary implication of this is that law is limited to the Mosaic covenant and grace to the Christian era. Dispensationalists, as a result, have often been charged with teaching two ways of salvation, one by works and the other by grace. The implications in the teaching of Scofield reflect upon the gracious nature of God, the unity of Scripture and salvation before the cross. While Covenant theology often blurs the distinctions between covenants, Dispensationalism goes to the opposite extreme.

It is perhaps obvious at this point that many writers in the Restoration Movement are rather closely aligned with Dispensationalism in covenant teaching. In fact one of the most outstanding features of the early Restoration preachers was their teaching on the covenants. Alexander Campbell's famous "Sermon on the Law" was delivered in 1816. With him, the term "law" described one of the Testaments, depending on how it was used. If it referred to the Old Testament, it did so in its entirety. If law was used to refer to the New, it did so as a covenant and never as a principle.

With this historical perspective in mind, we now will examine the teaching of the Bible regarding justification for those under Moses' Law.

## The Reality of Old Testament Salvation

The fact of salvation in the Old Testament is far easier to demonstrate than the means by which it was accomplished. The complexity of the problem is dictated by the seemingly antithetical statements within the two Testaments themselves. Whereas the Old is replete with positive references to grace, mercy and forgiveness, the New appears to point in an opposite direction regarding those living before its institution. The latter phenomenon has caused many writers to depict the Old Testament in such negative terms that salvation seems to be eliminated.

However, the New Testament itself shows clearly that many under Moses were saved. The Hebrew writer continues his praise of the faithful from Moses forward (Hebrews 11:23-40). Moses and Elijah "appeared in glory" with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36). David is used as an example of one who is righteous apart from works and as one "whose sin the Lord will never count against" (Romans 4:6-8; see Psalm 32:1-2). When Lazarus died, he was ushered by angels to Abraham's side (Luke 16:22). Similar examples abound, but these are sufficient to demonstrate the point. In some sense, salvation was obtained under the Mosaic Law. The basis, or means, of this salvation is that which now must be elucidated.

## The Means of Salvation Under Moses

Salvation under Moses has been misunderstood in various ways. Some, including many Jews of Christ's day, have confused national election with spiritual salvation. The Israelites were born into a covenant relationship with God, but it was a national covenant. Within this framework, the blessings were principally of a physical and temporal nature. Even the term "salvation" often connoted a deliverance from enemies. This relationship, however, did afford spiritual opportunities, because the nation was "entrusted with the very words of God" (Romans 3:2). On an individual basis, a spiritual standing with God was possible. Thus, the spiritual election of the Old Testament was not dissimilar to that of the New, in that it was predicated on individual acceptance of God as Savior.

The most serious misconception of salvation during the Mosaic era is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the Law itself. It has often been pictured as a purely legal system offering salvation only on the basis of perfect obedience or meritorious works. However, any demonstration of salvation under Moses consequently proves that it was not a system of mere works. Justification during any age, including the Mosaic, is based upon the "grace-faith" formula.

The Old Testament amply describes the grace of God. In a physical sense, the deliverance from Egypt was an act of grace (Deuteronomy 26:4-9). The giving of the Law was gracious (Deuteronomy 4:5-8), which explains the very positive exclamations of the Psalmist (Psalm 19:8,10; 119; 97; 103). The Law is not portrayed as an impossible burden, but rather as an accessible guide for life (Deuteronomy 30:11-14). Its provisions for the stranger and the poor and its directions for kindness toward animals indicate the beneficent nature of its Giver.

The spiritual emphasis of the grace of God is seen in his attitudes toward man. These are described beautifully in the words of Exodus 34:6-7a:

> *And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The* LORD, *the* LORD, *the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."*

Very similar wording is found in connection with the giving of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:6) and is reminiscent of Christ's statement in John 14:15. Obviously, the gracious nature of God is not revealed in the New Testament only.

The grace of God finds its ultimate expression in his forgiveness of man's sins. The most picturesque depiction of the forgiveness of sins are found in the Old Testament:

> *As far as the east is from the west,*
> *so far has he removed our*
> *transgressions from us"*
> (Psalm 103:12).

> *"Though your sins be as scarlet, they*
> *shall be as white as snow"*
> (Isaiah 1:18b).

> *"You have put all my sins behind*
> *your back"*
> (Isaiah 38:17c).

> *"I have swept away your offenses*
> *like a cloud,*
> *your sins like the morning mist"*
> (Isaiah 44:22a).

> *"You...will hurl all our inquities*
> *into the depths of the sea"*
> (Micah 7:19c).

These passages, and many more like them, portray forgiveness of sins both individually and collectively. Thus, during the Mosaic time sins were definitely forgiven.

However, this frequent Old Testament usage of forgiveness forms the crux of the problem. Leviticus 4:27-35 prescribes an animal sacrifice for one who commits an unwitting sin, and concludes with the promise "he will be forgiven." In an apparent contradiction, Hebrews 10:4 states that "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." This paradox lies at the heart of much of the theological controversy regarding the two covenants. Obviously, the passage in Hebrews needs to be harmonized with the one in Leviticus.

The most helpful explanation of Hebrews 10:4 is possibly to make a distinction between the basis and condition of forgiveness. The real basis of forgiveness is the death of Christ, applied retrospectively. Sacrifice was a condition which, although necessary under the Mosaic order, possessed no actual intrinsic merit. It served as a temporary condition and became invalid even in this respect at the cross. Thus construed, the Hebrew writer is declaring that the animal sacrifices to which some Christians were reverting had never constituted the real basis of forgiveness. Although they had once functioned as conditions of forgiveness (i.e., Leviticus 4:27-35), they had ceased to do this under the new covenant. This approach harmonizes the teaching of forgiveness in the two testaments, and suits the context of the Hebrew epistle. It also underscores the essentiality of discerning obedience for those of all ages. This distinction is helpful in understanding the place of obedience in the New Testament. Baptism saves only as a condition (1 Peter 3:21) and must never be confused with the real basis of salvation, the blood of Christ.

Even though it was Christ's death which gave validity to the types that pointed to him, this should not be taken to mean that no forgiveness in any sense was offered until the actual time of the cross. Man's part in salvation has to do with conditions, but the *basis* of salvation was planned and offered by God, who is essentially a timeless being (2 Peter 3:8). Therefore, the sacrifice of Christ was a reality in the mind of God without reference to

time as we conceive it. Jesus' death "was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake" (1 Peter 1:20). He was "the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). This retrospective function of Christ's death is stated in two key New Testament passages: Hebrews 9:15 and Romans 3:25. The former of these refers specifically to those under the Mosaic law, while the latter seems to have a wider application.

It may prove helpful to consider the redemption of transgressions by Christ's death in both a practical and a legal sense. From the human point of view, forgiveness of sins before the cross was of a practical nature, looking forward to the actual ransom which constituted the legal payment. This explanation allows for actual forgiveness in the Old Testament, but recognizes that if Christ had not died, even this would have been invalidated. The latter aspect, of course, was impossible since his death was "by God's set purpose and foreknowledge" (Acts 2:23a).

Thus far, the saving grace of God has been shown to be operative in the Mosaic period. The proper response to that grace on the part of man, of course, is faith. This term is used in various contexts with distinct shades of meaning, some relating directly, and others perhaps indirectly, to salvation. The New Testament uses "faith" in the sense of mental assent (John 12:42), trust (2 Corinthians 5:7), obedience (James 2:22-23), conviction (Romans 14:23), the New Testament revelation (Jude 3) and a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12:9). The first three of these—mental assent, trust and obedience—apply directly to the essentials of a saving faith. All three are implied in Hebrews 11:6 in a context dealing with the Old Testament saints. These were thus pleasing to God on the basis of a trusting, obedient belief.

The requirements and fruits of faith during the Mosaic era are given in the Law. The Law of God was to be the heart (Isaiah 51:7a). This would produce a penitent attitude (Joel 2:12-32) and a confession of unrighteousness (Psalm 143:2; Daniel 9:18). Circumcision of the heart was enjoined by Moses and restated by Jeremiah (Deuteronomy 30:6-10; Jeremiah 4:4). The life produced by such faith, with its beauty and simplicity, is described in Deuteronomy 10:12-13:

> *And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?*

These passages make it apparent that faith in the Old Testament was not substantially different from that in the New. This explains why Paul appealed to the Jewish Scriptures to show that "the righteous shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17; Habakkuk 2:4).

## First-Century Misconceptions

A consideration of the Law in isolation from the New Testament produces very positive reactions, as we have seen. However, the New Testament introduces the casual reader to what appears to be the opposite extreme, as the Law is often depicted in very negative terms. This difficulty can be resolved only by an understanding of the Jewish religion in the first century. A failure to distinguish between the religion described in the Old Testament and that found in later Judaism invites certain misinterpretations of both testaments. From

the disputes of Jesus with Jewish leaders to Paul's polemics in Romans and Galatians, it becomes apparent that perverted religion abounded.

Over a period of time, the Law had become for many an end within itself rather than the means to an end. It was designed to foster dependence on grace rather than on one's self, but the typical Pharisee viewed the Law as a basis for earning God's favor. This misplaced trust in the Law itself rather than in God through the Law was attacked by Christ very directly. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14) was spoken "to some who were confident in their own righteousness." Although the Pharisee had much to commend him, the essential ingredients of penitence and dependence on mercy were lacking. The Lord also dealt with the same problem among his own disciples (Luke 17:5-10). No matter how well one may keep the master's commands, one is still an "unworthy servant" in need of mercy.

The books of Romans and Galatians often use the term "law" in a somewhat negative sense because Paul was dealing with a perverted view and use of law. In Romans 9:31-33, Paul showed the futility of such improper attitudes toward the Law. It was intended to lead to and find ultimate fulfillment in Christ. Many of the Jews, however, relied on their own deeds rather than upon God's mercy through faith. The proof of this mistaken attitude is found in their rejection of Christ as a "stone that causes men to stumble" (9:33). Had they understood the proper functions of the Law, Christ would have been accepted as the ultimate solution for their problem of sin.

These mistaken attitudes lie in the background of the New Testament writers' polemics regarding the Law. Paul does quite often show law as a legal system, or to state it another way, law without God's mercy. In this light, consider the words of Galatians 3:12: "The man who does these things will live by them." But keep in mind also that this quote did not, in the original context of Leviticus 18:5, demand absolute perfection as a purely legal system. However, because many Jews of Paul's time were using the Law as an end within itself, the application was thus made that the Law blessed only those who kept it perfectly. This principle was true and is true, even under the New Testament, if one relies on law itself and not God's grace through his word. When one puts his trust in God's mercy, God requires faithfulness, but when one puts his trust in self, God requires perfection. The proper understanding of these two concepts will spell the difference between heaven and hell.

This background helps to portray what legalism, in its negative classical usage, actually is: Works performed with the idea that the works themselves merit God's favor are works of law. It should be rather obvious that such legalistic works would be possible under any covenant. Surprisingly, many miss this point and think that "works of law" must refer either to obedience to the Old Testament or obedience to the traditions of the fathers. If either of these explanations were the total answer, legalism would be impossible today for anyone claiming to follow the New Testament.

On the other hand, works of faith are works done with trust in a merciful God who can save us. We obey because we realize that our only hope of salvation is found in a Father who "justifies the wicked" (Romans 4:5). Therefore, law becomes an instrument through which we express trust in God (as in Abraham's case in Genesis 26:5), or trust in self (as in the Pharisee's case in Luke 18). The difference is primarily in the attitude with which we perform our obedience.

## A Twentieth-Century Misconception

Among Restoration writers, the question of whether the term "law" may be applied to the New Testament has become acute. One of the most influential writers in recent times has been K. C. Moser. His position is stated quite lucidly thus: "Law and grace mutually annul each other. . . . This truth reveals the error of those who regard the new covenant as law."[3] A number of other Restoration writers are not as dogmatic as Moser, but they are inclined to de-emphasize terms such as "works," "commandments" and "law." This tendency can lead to nothing less than a breakdown of respect for biblical authority. Characteristic of these writers is Anderson with this statement:

> In the New Testament, it is the person of Jesus we are anxious to obey, not a code of law. And we see his will revealed not only in his commands. They are really very few. But it is his nature which is amply revealed by numerous narratives of his relationships with people and with his Father.[4]

In context, Anderson is contrasting the importance of following Christ's example with the less significant keeping of commandments, since they are "few." The implications of this reasoning are not inconsequential. Such a position necessarily relegates the epistles to an inferior status, in that the Gospels contain the bulk of information about Christ's relationships while on earth. Further, the claim that Christ gave only few commands portrays a lack of understanding that all commands in the New Testament are ultimately from Christ through the Spirit (see John 16:13-14). While some persons may assess such implications to be rather minor, the consequences often suggest otherwise.

Writers of this persuasion believe that the word "law" must always be descriptive of a legalistic system. In this, they misunderstood that Paul was often negative toward law only because he was dealing with mistaken attitudes toward law and works. He was not, however, demeaning law itself. The term is normally used in both Old and New Testaments to denote simply the will of God. Therefore, to insist upon one definition of "law," even though the term is often used in different senses, some quite positive, is to practice poor hermeneutics. Law and grace are not mutually exclusive except when law is defined only in a destructively negative manner. Neither old nor new covenant was intended to be a "law of works."

The real solution to the problem of whether the New Testament is a law must be found in the Scriptures themselves. Though Christ certainly brought no legalistic system which demands sinless perfection, the Bible clearly teaches that he brought a distinctive system described as a law. Numerous Old Testament prophecies foretold this (see Genesis 49:10, Deuteronomy 18:18-19; Isaiah 2:2-4; 42:1-4; 51:5-6; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 11:17-21; Micah 4:1-2). Many of these passages are quoted or alluded to by New Testament writers.

In the New Testament, commandments are stressed (John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 2:3-5; 3:24). The new covenant is called specifically a law of faith (Romans 3:27), the law of the Spirit (Romans 8:2), the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2), and the law of liberty (James 1:25; 2:12). Paul said he was "under law of Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:21), and the Hebrew writer designated the new covenant as a law (Hebrews 7:12, 8:10, 10:28-31). Thus, while the Christian is not under law as a basis of justification, he is under law as a guide for life (Romans 6:14; 1 Corinthians 9:21). We are not under law as a means of earning righteousness,

but are rather under God's grace. However, we hasten to add that the same could be said of the faithful of the Old Testament. No person past or present could be under law in this sense and avoid damnation. Conversely, no one has ever been without law in another sense, or else sin would be impossible (1 John 3:4).

## Conclusion

In this study the burden of our efforts has been aimed at clearing away the misconceptions of the Mosaic Law. Therefore, we have primarily stressed its positive elements as it was used by God in the outworking of redemptive history. We would not, however, suggest that the Law is on a spiritual plane virtually equal to "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." The Old Testament system was obviously far inferior to the New Testament. It is called a "yoke" in Acts 15:10, and a cursory reading of Leviticus alone would demonstrate part of the reason. The old law was full of shadows and not substances, but it was not as bad as many writers would suggest.

Two extremes are to be avoided regarding this subject. One is to depict the new covenant in such a legalistic manner as to suggest strongly a system of works alone. The Old Testament itself was not such a system, and the New Testament tends even less in this direction. Care must be exercised to prohibit legalistic attitudes toward Christian service. When one has followed Christ's teaching very closely, he is still an unworthy servant in need of grace (Luke 17:10).

On the other hand, a serious student of the Bible must allow the terms used therein to be accepted and applied. Christ still insists on exacting obedience, and any manipulations of his commands cannot change this. Instead of being reactionary to either extreme, one should study the Bible as a whole, and then speak as the "very words of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Only when one has studied in its entirety the Scriptural usage of "law" can he understand why the Psalmist exclaimed, "Oh how love I your law!" (Psalm 119:97).

## Footnotes

1. C.I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), p. 14.
2. David Lipscomb, *Salvation From Sin*, ed.J. W. Shepherd (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1950), p. 202.
3. K.C. Moser, *The Gist of Romans* (Delight, AR: Gospel Light Publishing Company, 1957), p. 75.
4. Lynn Anderson, " 'Law' in the Letter to the Galatians," *Firm Foundation* 93 (1976): 69.

# Spiritual Singing

*Sherwin Mackintosh–New York, USA*

Since the beginning of time, God has surrounded himself with singing. He taught the morning stars to sing at creation (Job 38:7) and leads the thousands of angels who constantly sing around his throne. Yet nothing pleases him more than the singing of individuals whose hearts are tuned to him.

Throughout my Christian life, people have often asked me, "Can you teach me how to sing?" "How do you learn how to sing?" I want to respond by presenting a spiritual singing lesson—not a lesson in singing the right notes or understanding four-part harmony, but a lesson on what the Bible teaches about our singing.

## I Can Sing

A lot of people come into the kingdom either seeing themselves as a singer or a non-singer. Many feel that everyone either has the talent or does not. While I believe that some people are more naturally gifted than others, the Scriptures make it abundantly clear that we are all to be singers. Psalm 96:1 says to "sing to the Lord, all the earth." It says "all the earth," not just a few select individuals. Paul exhorts, "Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). He does not say to sing if that is your gift or if you have studied music. It is a command for all Christians.

Singing may be something that we have to learn how to do, just like we have to learn to study the Bible or share our faith. It may take some time; it may take some work; it may even take a little money; but it is something we all have to work on. Even the most talented singers who become Christians have to learn how God wants them to sing. What used to be a performance medium for them must now become part of a relationship. But God has promised all of us that we can do everything through him who gives us strength (Philippians 4:13). That includes singing!

## Spirit and the Mind

God does give us specific instructions on how to sing. Paul says,

> *"I will pray with the spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with the spirit, but I will also sing with my mind" (1 Corinthians 14:15).*

In our movement, we must maintain an important balance between the youthfulness of the spirit and the maturity of the mind. When we sing a song like "O Lord, Prepare Me," we love the feel of the song, and we are moved by the spirit of the music, but often we don't realize the meaning of what we are singing. In this song it's as if we are praying directly to God, "Give me your hardest trial, your toughest situation, because I want to be pure and holy, tried and true; I want to be a living sanctuary for you." The song contrasts the concept of the sanctuary in the Old Testament with that of the New Testament. The sanctuary of the Old Law was a physical building where God's Spirit actually lived. Today, thanks to Jesus Christ, our bodies are to be the living temple of God. We are pledging our own bodies to be a holy temple in which God can live. These deeper concepts require more than just a casual reading of the text and the discipline to fully focus on what they mean.

On the other hand, sometimes we know what the words mean. Our minds are in gear, but the spirit is lacking. We sing a song like "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee," and the last thing we see on our faces is joy! The conviction and power that we

need to preach the song are missing. It is dangerous when we become very comfortable with a song and sing without the spirit or our mind. We mindlessly repeat phrases that mean nothing to us. We honor him with our lips, but our hearts are far from him (Mark 7:6). The lyrics should mean something to us personally, or else we shouldn't be singing them. We must sing with the spirit and our minds.

## Communication

Our singing is always communication. We are either singing to God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, our brothers and sisters or people who are not yet Christians. Ephesians 5:19 says to "speak to one another" in our singing.

When we come to a worship service, we are literally taking refuge from a battle. Satan has been waging a war for our souls all week, and we are pulling together to encourage each other. When we sing "Don't You Want To Go To That Land," we are taking each others' spiritual pulse. We are essentially asking, "Are you still with us?" "Don't you want to go to heaven together?" "I'm on my way; I'm heaven bound!" When we sing "Rise Up, O Men of God," we are calling each other to arms: "We need your help! Rise up and make the church great." We are spurring one another on (Hebrews 10:24), preparing each other to go back into battle.

We have got to think more about speaking the songs than singing them. Somehow when we add a melody to words, what used to be a prayer becomes "just a song." The music is actually a vehicle to express the text. Each song that we sing is important and is not to be taken lightly. When Moses was teaching the Israelites a song, he told the people that the song was "not just idle words...they are your life" (Deuteronomy 32:47). We need to communicate each word of every song.

## Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs

In both Ephesians and Philippians, God speaks through Paul, saying that we are to sing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." This may at first look like three words for the same thing, but Paul is indicating three distinct forms of songs: "psalms" are taken directly from scripture; "hymns" are based on Scripture but expound on the deeper insights of the subject; and "spiritual songs" come from our hearts, our emotions. We need to love all three types of songs, not just the kinds that appeal to us musically.

For many of us, our taste in music is very personal. Some of us might like classical music and hate heavy metal, while others might think that rap music is the only true form of musical expression. Paul is not offering this as a musical smorgasbord. He is telling us to sing all three types—psalms, hymns and spiritual songs—because each type ministers to a certain area of our hearts. They are each essential to our spiritual health. While the emotional quality of the spiritual songs may appeal to some of us on a surface level, we also need the depth found in a hymn. On the other hand, those of us who are very comfortable with the hymns need the spontaneity and outward focus that a spiritual song can give. We all need the psalms to help us learn and memorize scripture. We need a balance of all three.

## A New Song

Psalm 40:3 says that "He put a new song in my mouth." I believe that God has given every Christian a unique song to sing, literally, a new song to sing. It might be personal, sung only to God, or it might be a song that thousands of disciples will sing around the world. Its purpose might be to deepen another person's faith or to cause thousands more to become Christians. God is the au-

thor of creativity and has placed many songs in our mouths that are waiting to be written down.

In Deuteronomy 30 God gave Moses a new song. He told Moses to "write it down." Moses did so that very day. God used Moses as an instrument to write it down and teach the Israelites. He said that the song would serve as a witness for him. Long after they had forgotten everything that Moses had taught them and had actually turned away from God, this song would remind them of what God had done for them. As disciples, I believe that we often have songs that God gives to us and we don't do anything with them. Sometimes I think that God tries to speak through us and we don't take time to stop and listen to the song God has for us. The challenge is for us to listen and "write it down."

We need to take this spiritual singing lesson seriously. Jesus sang with his disciples (Matthew 26:30) and wants us to sing with him as his modern-day disciples. God wants us to restore biblical singing in our own relationship with him. Then, when anyone walks into our fellowship and hears the beauty and conviction of our singing, they cannot help but fall down on their knees and proclaim, "God is really among you!" (1 Corinthians 14:25).

# Heads *and* Tails: Paradox in the Word of God

*Fred Faller—Boston, USA*

A number of years ago, I had the opportunity to study the Bible with a good friend of mine. He was somewhat of a philosopher who was trying to get to the bottom of spiritual issues in his life. At one point in our conversations, he made an interesting comment which I will try to encapsulate approximately as it was stated to me:

> Sometimes it seems to me that some of the most profound truth in the world is so basic that it can only be stated in the form of a paradox. It is almost as if there is no other way to express the full truth than to suspend the it between two seemingly contradictory statements. Both statements must be accepted together in order to be fully comprehended.

The concept had a ring of truth which has come into focus over the intervening years and has opened my eyes to several spiritual insights. In the next few pages, I will try to explain why I see this concept as so important to our understanding of the truth of God and how meaningful and significant it is in our spiritually confused world.

## The Nature of Paradox

Imagine a tight wire suspended between two pillars. Out in the middle, an aerialist is performing for a large crowd seated below. The tension of the wire, pulled in opposite directions by the pillars allows him to be there, in the middle. If either pillar were to be removed, there could be no performance. If the artist were to perform on top of either pillar and never cross the wire, we would have to wonder why the other pillar was there and what was the point of the wire. His performance would lack inspiration because his being in the middle of the wire is what inspires us. It is dangerous in the middle. It is tricky, uncomfortable and unsafe at best. We watch and say to ourselves, "You wouldn't catch me out there; maybe on top of one of the pillars, but even that looks intimidating to me."

The paradox can be seen as similar to the scenario above: Two pillars of truth, pulling in opposite directions with great tension and with the fullness of real truth hanging in the middle. To embrace this fullness means that we cannot cling to either pillar. We must venture out to the middle. It will never be comfortable; it will always be hard to explain and will invariably look foolish and dangerous to pillar huggers! But it is only when we get to the middle and stay there that we understand the real truth.

## A Good Example

A vivid example of a paradox in the Bible, where truth hung in the balance and the wisdom of God was displayed in revealing that truth to us, is in the story of Abraham and the sacrifice of his son Isaac (Genesis 22). Abraham had been promised by God that his only son Isaac would be the conduit to the blessing of the entire world. Now God, who had made this promise, commanded Abraham to take this son and sacrifice him on an altar. This presented a great paradox to Abraham.

Abraham's solution was simply to surrender to both sides of the paradox with the conclusion that he would sacrifice Isaac *and* that God would bless the entire world through him. He reasoned that to do this God would have to raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19). This conclusion was highly "irrational" but also highly regarded by God. Abraham was praised by God on the spot, and this episode was held up as an example for all eter-

nity of the true nature of faith! To have taken favor with one side of this paradox or the other would have been displeasing to God; it would also have been faithless and shameful for Abraham.

## Religious Heresy and the Paradox

Pillar hugging, when presented with a spiritual paradox, is the root of many Biblical heresies. Many of the foundational teachings about Jesus are embodied in paradox. Take the humanity of Jesus as an example. Was he all man? Was he all God? If he were one or the other, then how could he be the other *and* the one simultaneously? If he is God, then how can he relate to me? If he was a man, then to what extent could he be God? If he is God, then what is this business about being the *son* of God?

On and on it goes. Heresy after heresy has resulted from persons unwilling to humbly surrender to the paradox. Those who refuse to accept Jesus as God reduce him to a gifted spiritual leader, a prophet, a teacher and someone worth listening to, but not worthy of worship. Those who refuse to accept his humanity must rationalize many of his teachings and deny his ability to relate to us. To embrace all the Bible's teaching we must accept both parts of this truth in spite of the apparent intellectual conflict. Acknowledging that there is a paradox and accepting it allows us to be at peace with the true Jesus.

Until we clearly identify and accept this idea of paradox as a source of greater truth, we often vacillate between the two sides of such a truth, embracing one pillar or the other. The opposite pillar is then viewed as an uncomfortable source of confusion and embarrassment. We are often uncomfortable when pinned down by antagonists. We can be made to feel guilty for not being able to concisely and logically resolve the dilemma that paradox engenders, but to take sides would force us to ignore some aspect of God's teaching. How freeing it is then to simply acknowledge that paradox is often the way of God's truth. We don't have to be defensive or guilty. We don't have to feel irrational. We can be at peace with the acceptance of the seemingly irrational by understanding the nature of paradox and the truth it holds.

## All Those 'Contradictions'

"The bible is full of contradictions" is the siren's song for those unwilling to consider God's truth in paradox. I would not be so naive as to deny that there are many apparently contradictory statements in the Bible. When we accept the idea that the Bible is the inerrant word of God, these contradictions puzzle us and can weaken our faith if we labor over their contradictory nature. By knowing that God's truth is often embodied in paradox and accepting both sides of the apparent contradiction as being true, we surrender to the greater truth.

Here is a simple but typical paradox showing us this principle: God is a god filled with compassion and love. This is clear in the scriptures. God is also all powerful. He created the earth and everything in it and has the power to heal, raise the dead, cause crops to grow, make gold or anything else he wants to do of that sort. So why is there so much disease, death, famine and poverty in his creation? If we do not allow for paradox, we will come to roost in one of two places: We will become bitter because God has the power to resolve the suffering but is seemingly neither desirous of nor doing so, seriously compromising his credibility in the compassion department; or we will

become convinced that he really cannot solve the problem, and we lose faith in his omnipotence. Either scenario relegates God to something less than the God of the Bible.

Acceptance of all the teaching presents a paradox that forces us to search for a greater truth. God is both all powerful and all compassionate, and there is a purpose in God's restraint on resolving the problem of suffering. Perhaps suffering is essential to our spiritual growth. Perhaps the suffering that surrounds us helps us to learn about compassion and sacrifice. The real truth is not immediately obvious, and it is not comfortable. It forces us to look at our own weaknesses and inadequacies instead of making God weak or inadequate. It ultimately glorifies God and puts us in our place, rather than vice versa.

Interestingly enough, once a paradox is accepted and the full truth of it embraced, we often transcend it so that in hindsight it no longer seems like a paradox: The two pillars and the wire seem to resolve into a single all-encompassing truth! The Bible, in fact, has a lot of additional clarification which supports the purpose of suffering in our world and after a while, this becomes so clear to us that we forget how much of a stumbling block it is for others. By identifying paradox as a viable statement of truth, we can help others to step over the stumbling blocks rather than stumbling over them.

Embracing paradox in Scripture requires a humble surrendering to God's presentation of his truth. Pillar hugging is nothing less than an arrogant assumption that God was somehow unable to present his truth to us in a coherent manner, that it is our job to sift the chaff from the wheat! What is chaff and what is wheat is then subject to debate and creates heresy and division.

## Scientific Method and the Paradox

Accepting the greater truth in paradox is a key to understanding why scientific thinking is often in conflict with spiritual thinking. The Scientific Method is based on the supposition that when there is an effect, there is a perceivable and unique cause or combination of causes. If a coin is flipped, it will land heads or tails, or in the extreme, perhaps on its edge. The idea that it could fall heads *and* tails is irrational and not worthy of consideration in science. Science, as a tool to help us understand and utilize what God has given us, is very useful, but it has a finite domain: the physical world. To apply its methods to the spiritual world denies paradox and creates "pillar huggers." Unable to "rationalize" apparent conflicts that result from the pillar hugging, many scientifically oriented persons have abandoned their search for understanding God and his truths.

Our response to such thinking is often to throw more scientific facts at such a person, trying to demonstrate the nature of God through the observable (i.e. scientific) nature of his creation. What is often needed is to transcend science by introducing paradox as a viable statement of spiritual truth and leading them to a broader, richer understanding of God.

## Spiritual Paradoxes

The space allotted for these thoughts prevents further discussion of the many paradoxical truths found in God's word. Consider the following list for further reflection. Ponder the nature of each paradoxes, the "full truth in the middle," how they could become stumbling blocks to faith and the heresies that develop if we pillar hug either side of the truth:

- The kernel of wheat: Die to live (John 12:24)
- Sacrifice: Give to get (Luke 6:38)
- "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it" (Luke 9:23-26)
- God's power is made strong in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
- "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:26)
- The first will be last and the last will be first (Mark 10:31)
- Submission: The victory of surrender
- The wisdom of the world is foolish to those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)
- The Savior who didn't save himself
- Three in One: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- The divinity and the humanity of Jesus
- The eternal sacrifice of Jesus: One moment in time redeeming for all time, forward and backward
- A day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day (2 Peter 3:8)
- He who is not with me is against me (Matthew 12:30; Luke 11:23); he who is not against me is for me (Mark 9:40; Luke 9:50)
- Free from all men I make myself a slave of all (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)
- Prophecy: Multiple fulfillments of singular prophecies
- Nebulae and Sparrows: The God who hung the stars and gives each one a name is still concerned about each sparrow that falls.

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PART 5



# Ideas and Planning

# Ideas for Personal Growth and Greater Impact

### 1. Plan a Personal Retreat

Plan an eight-hour retreat to just be alone with God. Decide in advance how you will use each hour, but do not try to cram too much in. Leave plenty of room for God to move. Use the last half hour or hour to write down what you have learned, what you might want to do with a future time, and what you would advise others you lead to do with a time like this.

### 2. Get Feedback on Your Teaching

Ask three trusted people to give you feedback each time you speak to a group. Have an initial meeting with them to tell them what you are looking for and then they can just write you short notes or send you an e-mail each time they hear you preach or teach. After six months sit down with the three of them and discuss what you have learned.

### 3. Write Letters

Write one letter every week for the next ten weeks to people who have most profoundly influenced your life and taught you important things about character and leadership. List their names here:

1. _____ 6. _____
2. _____ 7. _____
3. _____ 8. _____
4. _____ 9. _____
5. _____ 10. _____

### 4. Become a Better Listener

Start by asking three people to evaluate you as a listener. Let one of those be your spouse, if you are married, or a close friend if you are not married. Let another be someone that you are training or discipling. Let the third be someone you have counseled recently. Tell them that you are working on becoming a better listener and want to get their honest feedback. Later, write them a note and let them know what you learned from their feedback.

### 5. Life-Changing Weekend

This one is just for married couples, but could probably be adapted for some who are single. Plan a month or two in advance to take another couple with the two of you away for an overnight. Especially pick a couple who would not expect you to ask them. Pick a couple who are weak or struggling with their faith or their marriage. Save your money so you can pay all the expenses, especially if they would find it hard to pay. Go far enough away so that you have a good amount of time in the car. Plan some fun time and some time to have some good spiritual talks. Once back, write them a note that lets them know your vision for their relationship. It will be a weekend that will change their lives!

### 6. Personal Marriage Retreat

Go away with your spouse for a three-day, two-night retreat. Take along a copy of *Friends & Lovers* by Sam and Geri Laing (and the study guide). Find a really neat and memorable place to go. Plan ahead to take time to read the chapters and then discuss them. Do not turn on a TV. Do not read newspapers. Just drop out for a couple of days and focus on each other. Spend the last hour together talking about what you have learned and how you want to help other married couples enrich their intimacy and communication.

### 7. 'Practice What You Preach' Exercise

Start by writing down 10 things you strongly believe a servant of God should be doing and things you preach and teach. Next, evaluate how you think you are doing in each of these areas. Then go over what you have written down with a mentor or discipler (and your spouse if you are married) and get their feedback. Finally, write a letter to God describing the changes you want to make.

### 8. Learning from Problems

Write down five things in your life right now that are the most difficult for you to deal with. It might be your dating life, a problem in your marriage, a difficult relationship, some responsibility you don't feel well qualified for, or a number of other things. Next write down what you believe God is trying to teach you with each one of these, and spend some time being thankful that God is at work in all things for your good. Share your conclusions with someone close to you.

### 9. Appreciating and Showing Grace

Write down 10 ways that God and others have shown grace to you. Then beside each, write down someone you need to show grace to in the same way.

### 10. Vision Exercise

Write down the names of people you are currently involved in discipling, training or raising up to lead. Then write down beside their names what you can see each of them doing five years from now. Later on, share with them personally or in a card what you have written.

### 11. New Territory

Write down ten things you have never done before, but things that could inspire others or help others to become Christians. Be reasonable, but still, let your mind go. Pick one of these and do it this week. Next week pick another and so on until you have finished the list. After the ten weeks, write down what God has done with your new adventures.

### 12. Plan a Third-world Week with Your Family

Obviously, this one is for first-world families. Unfortunately, third-world families cannot have a first-world week. You may want to discuss this fact. Unplug the television. Change your diet. Eat very simply. No convenience foods allowed. Have several times during the week when you cut the power off without warning. Combine this with reading about life in some impoverished countries.

### 13. Be Still!

Did your mother ever tell you that? Leaders tend to be doers. That is good and logical, but we still need time to be still and quiet (Psalm 37:7, 46:10; Isaiah 30:15, 32:17). For one week, set aside 10 minutes a day to just be still and quiet. Do not read or plan or even pray during this time. Just be still. At the end of one week, write down what you have learned.

### 14. Memorize a Favorite Chapter from the Bible

God's word is full of challenges to grow in knowledge. We are told to keep God's words in our hearts so that we will stay far from sin. Our people need a living example in this area. It is very easy to fall into laziness not only in evangelism, but with God and his Word. This will keep us sharp and sharpen our swords in the spiritual battle out there.

### 15. Have the Preteen Ministry Over

Most church leaders turn over this ministry to others, which is fine. However, a whole generation of kids is growing up and needs to know that their leaders care. Having this group over communicates that you want to know their names and relate to their age group. Do a survey with them. Ask them what their classmates think of Jesus, what they think of Him, what it means to be a disciple, what the church could do to better meet their needs and what fun activities they would like to see planned. "From the mouths of babes" . . . There will be a lot you will learn.

### 16. Have a Deuteronomy 6 Day with Your Children

Take a one and a half hour block of time with each individual child, regardless of their ages. Take them somewhere special and communicate. Tell them why you love and are proud of them. Give them many examples. Also mention an area that they need to grow in. Ask how you can be a better parent. Discuss their views of God and get a feel for their hearts for his kingdom. After each child has had their individual times, close out the day with a family outing (movie, dinner, walk on the beach . . .).

### 17. When You Are Feeling Attacked or Defeated

Review the list of your sins that you made as you were becoming a disciple. If you don't have it, write one out from memory. Show it to your spouse and others who studied with you. Then write down how you felt when you repented and were baptized. Meditate on the cross. Write down 100 things you are grateful for. By the end of this time you will be neither depressed nor defeated. And you will be much easier to live with.

### 18. When You Feel Like Complaining

Plan to serve. Put time in your schedule, for the week or the month, for one thing to do every day that will serve someone else that is either 1) some way you have always wanted to serve, 2) will surprise the person being served, 3) will be anonymous service, or 4) any combination of these. Take your family to serve in a food kitchen, pantry, shelter, nursing home, etc. Make it one of your family nights every month.

### 19. When Your Trust for God Is Weakening

Write down a list of 10 reasons why God should trust you. Write down a list of 10 reasons why you should trust God. Write down the plans you had for your life that didn't work out. Compare them to the plans God had for your life to prosper you and not to harm you. Note the times your

selfish ambition got you into trouble and the times your selfless service was rewarded by God. Write a short story on how your life would have worked out if you had not become a disciple. Share it with someone close and ask for comments.

### 20. When You Don't Know How to Express Your Feelings to God

Study the Psalms. Note each of the emotions David felt and expressed about God. How did he resolve the negative emotions and how did he use the positive ones?

### 21. The Fall-Away Test

Write down a list of the hardest things you can imagine that could happen to you. Circle the ones that would make you fall away. That is where the cracks in your faith are. Read Romans 8.

### 22. KNN Extravaganza

Get a set of the KNN editions. Watch #7 first—the history of God's modern-day movement in context. Then watch the others from beginning to current in any order you want. Do this as a D-group, Bible Talk, ministry meeting, family night, church, etc. Dream what KNN will be like in the year 2000, 2010, etc.

### 23. Stretch Yourself

Share your faith in a way that is uncomfortable and/or unfamiliar to you. Study with a person who intimidates you. Ask someone who has never heard you lead a study to sit in while you lead a study. Ask them to be brutally honest in what they thought. Take your children out for a treat and ask them how you could be a better father or mother.

### 24. Ministry Kids

For those in the full-time ministry, have a family devotional focused on being "preacher's kids." Read the passages on Eli's family and then ask what are the best things and hardest things about being a minister's kid. One leader with teens reported that the ensuing discussion was very freeing and revealing. Emphasis from ministry parents must be on the freedom to be totally honest without fear of hurting the parents' feelings. Emphasis should also be placed on the kids telling anything that the parents don't know without fear of harsh reactions. Let the kids know that they are more important to us than the ministry and that we would get out if convinced it was best for the family spiritually to do so. One leader shared that it was this devotional that freed his daughter up and led to her becoming a disciple.

*Contributors: Jimmy Allen, Thomas Jones, Roger Lamb, Wyndham Shaw*

# Raising Up Leaders

List ten people you want to raise up into leadership.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

# Helping Weaker Disciples

List ten weaker disciples that you want to give attention to during the next month.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

# Neighborhood I

In the space below draw a map of your neighborhood or a diagram of your apartment building, including at least twenty houses or apartments that are near yours. Write in the first and last names of all your neighbors living in these places. If you don't know them, develop a plan for getting them all. Turn this map or diagram into a prayer and planning list for reaching out.

# Neighborhood II

List ten activities you can host or organize in your neighborhood to help people get to know each other. Pray your place will become the neighborhood "center."

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

# Fruit of the Spirit

Sit down with your spouse or closest friend and read through the fruits of the Spirit. Ask the other person to give you honest feedback on how they see you in relationship to each one. Put down the feedback you get here and then pick the one area where you need the most growth. Make some decisions about that area and focus on it in prayer.

1. Love _____

2. Joy _____

3. Peace _____

4. Patience _____

5. Kindness _____

6. Goodness _____

7. Faithfulness _____

8. Gentleness _____

9. Self-control _____

# Heroes

List ten heroes in the faith and five secular heroes. Write down what it is in each of them that you want to imitate.

## Spiritual

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

## Secular

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

# Orphans and Widows

Do you see yourself as an effective leader? Do you pass the James 1:27 test? Write down the names of ten couples who are wanting to adopt a child or those you believe could adopt a child with encouragement. Think about what you can do to encourage this. Is your own name on the list?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Write down the names of five widows that you know (disciples or non-disciples, those who are where you are or those who may be far away). Write down what you can do to support and encourage them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

# Sacrifice

Write down ten items (or services) that you spend money on regularly but are "non-essentials." Make a decision to give up one of these for the next year and give the money to the poor.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

How much can you give in a year as a result of this sacrifice?

# Relationships with 'Nonleaders'

Write down the names of all the "nonleader" disciples you have had in your home in the last six months. If your list has less than ten names on it, make a plan for some major changes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

# Goals

Write down the goals you have for at least five to ten people you are working with at this time.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

# Books

List ten books that you believe would significantly help you as a leader and what month you plan to read each.

Or ask ten other leaders what book has most helped them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

# Dreams

List ten dreams you have for the next five to ten years.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

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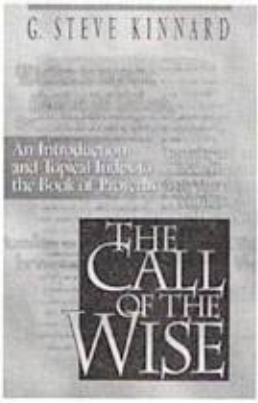


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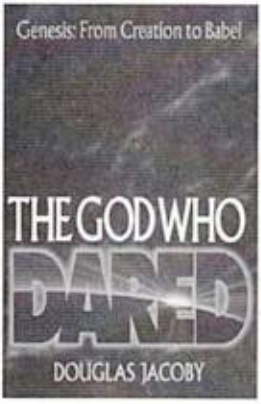


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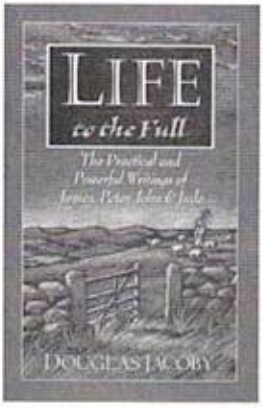


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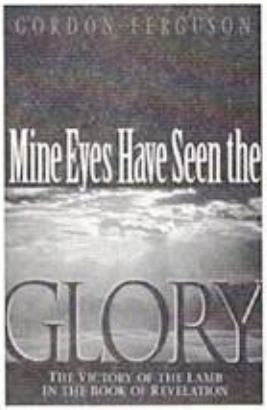


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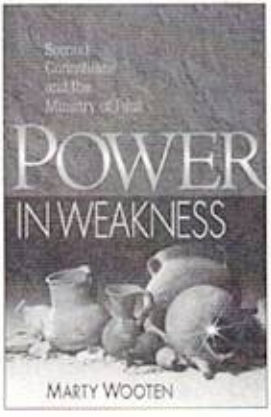


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